

OUT OF AFRICA by Kurt Luedtke

EXT/A FOREST GLADE-DAY

It's dark, too green for Africa, sun-dappled and still. It might be a photograph--but there is life here:

CHITTERINGS and STIRRINGS. The HEAVY PROGRESS of a great animal, passing near, SNUFFLING and CHEWING. Suddenly: a FRANTIC FLURRY, a moment's chase. A SHARP SCREAM, small, cut short. A HUSH.

And now, a WOMAN'S VOICE . . . dry . . . precise . . .

HER VOICE

I had a farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong hills.

Slowly, SHOT WIDENS. BEGIN MAIN TITLES.

HER VOICE (cont'd)

The equator runs across these highlands, a hundred miles to the north, and the farm lay at an altitude of over six thousand feet. In the daytime, you felt that you had got high up, near to the sun, but the early mornings and evenings were limpid and restful, and the nights were cold.

INTO VIEW: a huge Cape buffalo, staring, hostile. The glade is merely a small part of this tongue of forest.

HER VOICE (cont'd)

The geographical position and the height of the land combined to create a landscape that had not its like in all the world. There was no fat on it, and no luxuriance anywhere; it was Africa distilled up through six thousand feet, like the strong and refined essence of a continent.

SHOT CONTINUES TO WIDEN. The forest trickles away onto a broad plain, grassy, strewn with acacias. At distance, a lion, imperial, saunters. THROUGH SHOT. TITLES CONTINUE.

HER VOICE (cont'd)

The colors were dry and burnt, like the colors in pottery. The views were immensely wide. Everything that you saw made for greatness and freedom and unequalled nobility.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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2/

HER VOICE (cont'd)

The sky was rarely more than a pale blue or violet, with a profusion of mighty, weightless, everchanging clouds towering up and sailing on it, but it has a blue vigor in it, and at short distance it painted the ranges of hills and the woods a fresh deep blue.

The SHOT is vast: we feel it can't GO WIDER. It does.

HER VOICE (cont'd)

In the middle of the day, the air was alive over the land like a flame burning; it scintillated, waved and shone like running water, mirrored and doubled all objects, and created great Fata Morgana.

The SHOT is now a panorama, all the world contained by the horizon, and all is as she said it was. END TITLES.

HER VOICE (cont'd)

Up in this high air, you breathed easily, drawing in a vital assurance and lightness of heart. In the highlands, you woke up in the morning and thought:

Here I am, where I ought to be.

MUSIC. SHOT BECOMES AERIAL, flying low over the teeming plain, the game scattering, accelerating now until the ground blurs. SUDDENLY, broad water, trackless and blue. A sense that we are traveling a great distance, even in time.

MATCH CUT:

EXT/LOW AERIAL OF BLUE WATER-DAY

But the sea is darker, colder. A coastline appears, lush farmland beyond. ANGLE ADJUSTS to include the wingtips of a biplane.

SUPERIMPOSE: Denmark, 1912

INT/A ROOM AT FRIJSENBORG, A GREAT MANOR HOUSE-DAY

A GIRL of 15, slim and nude, ingenuous, one haunch on a high stool, poses with palette, holds her brush to a large mirror which replaces the canvas on an easel before her.

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THE GIRL

They all want countesses. Countesses
at least.

KAREN (O.S.)

Then both of us are doomed.

THE GIRL

Your people've got money.

NEW ANGLES

KAREN DINESEN at her own easel, barefoot in a peasant skirt,
painting a portrait of a girl painting a self-portrait.

She is 27, aristocratic, rebellious, sardonic--failed masks
which cannot hide her vulnerability. Her intellect is
substantial, of little value to a woman of her time, her
emotions those of a gifted child become delinquent. Afterward,
the impression of a small animal at bay--sharp teeth,
desperate eyes.

The third-story room is sunlit, spartan.

THE GIRL

There's one who wants to kiss me.

(no response)

Baron Blixen. Not your Baron Blixen.
Eror.

(then)

Cook says you and Hans make love.

KAREN

I'm wicked then. Have they
taught you about hell?

THE GIRL

Do you love him?

KAREN

His aeroplane, too.

THE GIRL

You could be a baroness.

KAREN

(dry)

God himself prays for that.

She steps back, wipes her brush; the girl runs to look.
FAVOR THE CANVAS, its background blank, the girl-as-subject
more attractive than the girl-as-artist. Faint, O.S., the
SOUND of the biplane, BUILDING.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

4/

THE GIRL

When you finish--will you show
the men?

KAREN

That would be hard on them,
when you're not to be had. Put
on your clothes now.

Karen caps her paints. The girl will put on panties, a skirt.

THE GIRL

Count Eregaard took a village
girl.

KAREN

He was old then. Free.

The girl sits to put on high shoes. Karen wipes her brushes.

THE GIRL

Miss Karen? I've a chance,
don't I?

Karen goes to her, traces her nose and lips with a finger,
cups her chin, moves her face in the light.

KAREN

We could take you to the courts
of Persia . . . on a collar . . . and
trade you for a throne. But it
wouldn't be love, and you should
try for that.

O.S., the NOISE of the biplane BECOMES VERY LOUD, RECEDES
as the plane dives low over the castle.

FROM THE WINDOW

A hunting party returning, some mounted, some in an open
carriage with champagne. Gamekeepers walk behind with dogs,
young boys laden with dozens of dead birds. In the entourage,
old men, severe, including COUNT FRIJS, and a dozen young
people, among them BROR BLIXEN, and DAISY, SOPHIE, EA, EILE.
They CLAMOR, wave at the plane, which banks to come low
again. Only Bror, mounted, shotgun crooked in his elbow,
stares up INTO CAMERA.

BROR'S POV

Karen, the half-nude, half-hidden girl, watch at the window.

NEW ANGLES

The plane's pilot (HANS BLIXEN) waves a bottle, drops it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

5/

Errol wheels his horse, stands in his stirrups to FIRE.

The bottle EXPLODES in mid-air.

Errol looks back to the window.

High up on the castle wall, the window is vacant.

EXT/A DEER PARK-MINUTES LATER

Hans--Errol's identical twin--checks the undercarriage of his plane, takes his bag from the cockpit. Two deerhounds burst from the wood, then Errol and Daisy at full gallop, the other young people streaming after.

And trailing, Karen, dirt-smudged and disheveled, barefoot, skirt bunched before her and high on her thighs.

Hans, the others, AD LIB greetings, insults. The men inspect the plane. Hans tosses his bag up to Errol, grinning:

HANS

You know I'm the favorite so
you shoot at me!

ERROL

(grinning)

If you were--I shouldn't miss!

They are 26, good friends. Errol seems the younger, broader in appetite and humor, forever cheerful, Hans the more saturnine, discriminating. Karen joins Ea and Ella, forces her horse between theirs.

HANS

The sisters Dinesen--all of you
here! How long can you stay?

Ea

Just the weekend.

Ella

'Lo, Hans.

He puts his hand on Karen's bare knee. Intimate:

HANS

You've fallen again.

KAREN

I thought it would please you.

HANS

We'll have to clean you up.
(she colors)

KAREN

I want to go flying.

(CONTINUED)

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6/

HANS

Your mother wouldn't like that.

Dominant, he takes her foot from the stirrup, mounts behind. The group moves off, privileged youth at leisure.

INT/LARGE BEDROOM-DAY

Ea, Elle, in gowns, primp with a maid before a full mirror. Karen, in an elegant white satin slip, lies reading on the bed. Ea intends to make the most of her bosom. Sweetly:

ELLE

Do you think they mean for the nipples to show?

Stung, Ea adjusts her dress. To Karen:

EA

Why do we always have to wait for you?

KAREN

Go along then.

ELLE

We ought to go down together.

EA

Oh, she just wants them to make a fuss. Come on now.

They go off. The maid takes Karen's dress from a wardrobe, smooths it, presents it. It's dark brown, lace to the neck.

KAREN

(dry)

Ravishing. Just leave it, will you?

The maid hangs the dress, goes off. Karen reads.

INT/DINING ROOM-NIGHT-MOVING SHOT

Silver, candlelight, dark wood gleaming. The young people, animated, and eight aristocratic elders, stiff with their own dignity. The women outnumber the men. One of the serving girls is Karen's model, who feels Bror's gaze.

Above the salt, HOLD ON Count Frijs, 60, ponderous at the head of the table, Sophie and Bror at his elbows, then Hans and Daisy, Karen beside her, defiant in the heavy satin slip (she's belted it with ribbon), eyes extravagantly blacked, throat and shoulders bare, a Parisian among the Danes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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THE COUNT

(to Hans and Bror)
You're second sons, you won't inherit, there's nothing for you here.

BROR

You forget--my cows.
(laughter)

THE COUNT

No shooting to match it--and there's some will make their fortune.

HANS

(to Bror)
Our loving uncle's trying to run us off.

KAREN

(to the Count)
What will you charge to run me off?

THE COUNT

(ignoring her)
Animals there not even named yet! Every shape Negro God ever imagined--blood drinkers, some of them--and some that file their teeth sharp as daggers! Imagine the pain of that!

DAISY

I shouldn't want them drinking blood in the house! Or chewing on me with those teeth, either!

She imitates a beaver. More laughter.

SOPHIE

It's all wet and snake-y.

THE COUNT

Nonsense. British East. Down past Suez.

KAREN

(cool, to shock)
I've read they circumcise the women there--is that true?

Daisy, Sophie giggle at her shamelessness. Bror grins.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

8/

BROR

Not for you, eh, Tanne?

KAREN

I wonder if I'd notice a difference.

Laughter, some of it embarrassed. To reproach her:

THE COUNT

Thought much about your father
out there--he'd have been with
me, you know.

KAREN

We'd have all been together then.

They're all used to her stories about how much her father
loved her; she's a bore that way.

HANS

The shooting'd be all right--
for a fortune I'd go elsewhere.

BROR

Could you make a living hunting?

THE COUNT

You'd want a farm, I think. Not
much future otherwise. . .

INT/THE LIBRARY-NIGHT

He SINGS the Frühlingsglaube to Ella's violin. The dogs
sleep, the woman predominates. Hans watches Karen, sitting
alone, smoking, bored, catches her eye. She looks away.
He slips out. In a moment, she follows. The young people
notice. The Countess pretends to be unaware.

INT/HANS'S GUEST ROOM-NIGHT-ON KAREN

Her back to Hans, uncomfortable. (He's undressing.)

KAREN

Are we assuming I'd marry you?

HANS (O.S.)

No.

KAREN

(beat)

Do you think I would?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

9/

HANS (O.S.)

(beat)

I suppose you might.

Moment, then her chuckle, rich, without rancor. Shoulders naked, Hans moves INTO FRAME, kisses her neck, slips a strap from her shoulder, hands heavy with ardor.

HANS (cont'd)

Is that amusing?

KAREN

The candor of the conditional tense.

His hands roam her body; she'd like to escape. But:

HANS

Touch me.

She turns, submitting. He's hungry for her, almost cruel.

EXT/A BROAD HEATH-DAY

Early morning, misty. Karen and Bror (we won't know yet he isn't Hans) move across the moor, hunting. Dogs work ahead of them. A gamekeeper at distance.

A grouse WHIRRS UP before Karen. Her swing is smooth; she FIRES. The dogs retrieve the bird; she leaves it for the gamekeeper. They move on.

Another bird EXPLODES in front of Bror. Startled, he's late getting on it, doesn't even shoot. As they walk on:

KAREN

Where's your mind this morning?

BROR

Africa, I think.

KAREN

You've no excuses, you could go.

BROR

"Regrettably, I am impoverished."

(then)

How is it with Hans?

KAREN

Horizontal, mostly.

BROR

(laughing)

I mean what's going to happen?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

10/

KAREN

Oh . . . we'll fight about something,
I suppose.

BROR

Do you care about him?

KAREN

More than Jesus.

(then)

Less than a good horse.

Bror's still laughing when another bird FLIES. He WHOOPS,
recovers, drops it with a nice long shot, bows to Karen.

EXT/ON THE MOOR-LATER

Bror's lying back, lazing in the morning sun. Karen sits
on her coat, drinking tea from a thermos. Then:

BROR

I think I need a kiss.

She knee-walks to him, kisses him easily; it's sensual,
languid, the erotic hug of old fond friends.

BROR (cont'd)

A long time, since we've done
that.

KAREN

But never to bed.

BROR

I'm just now learning how all
the parts work.

(they laugh, then)

KAREN

You could take me to Africa.

BROR

Love to.

KAREN

But I could pay for it.

BROR

Have to, if you want me along;
after the damn awful cows, I
haven't a cent.

KAREN

You'd have to marry me--it's
the only way I'd get the money.
Would that be terrible?

(CONTINUED)

BROR

I'll probably do worse.

KAREN

The way you're going.

BROR

(opens, closes his eyes)
Am I supposed to think you're serious?

KAREN

It wouldn't interest you: it's sensible.

BROR

(sits up, weary)
Again please?

KAREN

We're made for each other. They wouldn't teach me anything useful--now I've failed to marry. There's a punishment for that: Miss Dinesen's at home.

And you. You've gone through all your money--now you're off seducing the servants. We're a set, all right.

We've always done for each other; we could give us a life, for a while. We might be all right. If we weren't

(shrugs)

at least we'd have been somewhere.

BROR

(dry)

You're sure you're not being too romantic?

KAREN

I've tried that.

(beat)

I could get us enough for a farm . . . I wouldn't confine you if that's what you think.

BROR

Christ, Tanne--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

11A/

KAREN

(getting up)

Stay with your cows then! Die
in the bed you were born in,
I don't care!

BROR

(calm)

There's Hans.

KAREN

He wouldn't care. If you were
interested.

BROR

(beat)

Kiss me again, will you?

As she leans over him, he pulls her down, rolls on top of
her. A long kiss, his hand on her breast; they're both
aroused. With regret, he thinks better of it.

BROR

We've been friends too long,
I think.

It was clear she was available. They're awkward getting
up. As they walk on:

BROR (cont'd)

We could think about it.

KAREN

You go to hell.

He laughs. In a while, she grins.

KAREN (cont'd)

You won't tell?

He shakes his head, puts his arm around her shoulder. They
walk away, sweet friends.

EXT/OUTSIDE FRIJSENBORG-DAY-WIDE

A servant straps the Dinesens' luggage to a large open car as the sisters say goodbye to the Count and his wife, some of the others. Hans is there, and Bror, playing with the dogs.

WITH KAREN

Kissing Daisy, moving on to Hans, whose smile is nostalgic.

KAREN

Will you be at Nasbyholm?

HANS

Or somewhere. Goodbye, Tanne.

He kisses her in a way that puzzles her. Now Bror CALLS her away, to him. One of the deerhounds is upright, paws on Bror's chest, Bror's hand in his teeth as they play.

BROR

I'd like to think about it.

KAREN

(low)

You talked to Hans!

BROR

I'd like to think about it.

KAREN

Go ahead. Think.

Bror turns away, plays with the dog, grins.

BROR

Let's do it.

KAREN

(slow)

Do you mean it?

BROR

(gentle, firm)

Yes. I do.

Moment, then she nods, turns to the car, preoccupied, then turns back.

KAREN

I'll write to you then.

He nods. She goes to the car, runs all the way back. Tears in her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

15/

KAREN (cont'd)
I swear: I'll never give you
a day to regret.

She runs back to the car; it drives off. Hans and Eror--
identical--are together with the dogs.

EXT/A CALM SEA-NIGHT-WIDE

On the far-off lights of a small steamship. Now an Arab dhow,
lateen-rigged, GHOSTS THROUGH FOREGROUND and is gone.

INT/THE BAR IN THE PASSENGER LOUNGE-NIGHT

The tabled area in the b.g. deserted, dark. At the bar, dim-
lit by paraffin, a weary Indian barman and Karen, sticky
with the heat, barefoot in silk pajamas, sitting with
BERKELEY (Barclay) COLE, very small, fair, delicate, a boy
with the gaze of a man, in dinner jacket, khaki shorts.
Standing, LORD DELAMERE, 43, a stocky Napoleon in suspended
tuxedo trousers and stiff shirt.

On the bar, a new bolt-action rifle, beautifully machined,
in a leather case. In each hand, Delamere holds a cartridge,
one a massive .600 solid-nose, a small cigar, the other a
.375 soft-nose, sleek and gleaming.

DELAMERE
There's a bloody great beast
just there! He thinks: shall I
mash her? Or shall I nibble a
while on her charming breast?
He comes! Pick your gun!

KAREN
The velocity of the magnum--

DELAMERE
Jesus God, she's read a book!

KAREN
I'll be quicker with the lighter
gun?

BERKELEY
Brave girl. Shoot for the eye.

DELAMERE
(derisive)
Shoot for the eye!

BERKELEY
Lord Delamere believes in knocking
things down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

14/

DELAMERE

(opening his shirt)

Things that want to eat you.

BERKELEY

Bell shot a thousand elephant
with a two-fifty-six.

DELAMERE

Course he's dead now.

(to her)

Here's what happens when
you don't knock them down.

His chest is scarred.

KAREN

What did that?

DELAMERE

Lion.

BERKELEY

Rather old lion, actually:
I'd have done him with a brick.

Delamere laughs, rebuttons his shirt. To her:

DELAMERE

Relatives by marriage: they've
never money, seldom sense.

Good night, Karen.

(finds his jacket)

Good night, Barclay. You sod.

He strolls off. Berkeley nods to the barman for another.
Karen flutters her pajama shirt.

KAREN

Why are you never hot?

BERKELEY

Malaria, I s'pose--you never
want to be cold again.

D's right, you know--Bror means
you to have this for your sort
of thing--eland, kudu, the odd
croc. It's not right for heavy
work.

KAREN

You've killed a lion.

(he nods)

An elephant?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

15/

Yes. BERKELEY

How many? KAREN

Several. BERKELEY

You seem . . . young. To have
done that. KAREN

You mean small, I think. I'm
both, I s'pose. I'm twenty-six,
how old are you? BERKELEY

(defensive)
Twenty-eight. KAREN

Moment. He's silent but his eyes are grinning. Then:

What do you think of Bror? KAREN (cont'd)

Haven't shot with him--that's
how you know. BERKELEY

Who do you shoot with then? KAREN

Comfortable alone, actually.
Or with Finch-Hatton. BERKELEY

Would you take a wife? KAREN

(blushes)
I don't know. BERKELEY

I meant hunting. KAREN

Sorry. BERKELEY
(beat)
No.

Why not? KAREN

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

16/

BERKELEY

Oh . . . it would change things.

PUSH IN TO STUDY THE RIFLE

KAREN (O.S.)

It wouldn't have to change things, would it?

BERKELEY (O.S.)

I think so, yes.

The NOISE of a CROWDED STREET (V.O.)

EXT/MOMBASA STREET-DAY-MOVING

CLOSE ON a turbaned native, his attention fixed, his expression hostile. He is FARAH ADEN, Somali, Hamitic: Pharaoh's son in blackface.

NEW ANGLE

Farah rides opposite Karen and her deerhound in an open carriage. They're moving up an unpaved street, a sea of traffic, commerce, twenty races in every costume. Karen looks at everything, glances often, uncomfortable, at Farah, who stares at the dog, his antipathy apparent.

KAREN

Where is Baron Blixen now?

FARAH

He says he will--

As Farah speaks, the dog GROWLS. Karen cuffs him.

KAREN (cont'd)

Honestly!

FARAH

He says he will come to you at Mombasa Club.

KAREN

(impatient)

Yes, but where is he now?

FARAH

He is at some place.

(beat)

There is no cause to worry, msibu.

KAREN

(irritated)

I wasn't worried. I just--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

17/

She breaks off, looks away; she won't be explaining to a servant.

In the passing throng, porters move toward the wharf, each carrying an elephant tusk.

EXT/INT/MOMBASA CLUB-DAY

Roofed verandahs open to the air. Clean, otherwise shabby. White-jacketed blacks in service to colonial types. Bror walks quickly THROUGH SHOT.

AT THE DESK

An Indian FACTOTUM AD LIBS orders to a boy in Swahili.

BROR

You've got Miss Dinesen somewhere.
In today--from Denmark.

FACTOTUM

(searches his register)
Could it be sixteen? She signs
by Baroness Blixen.

Bror grins, then, as he takes the stairs, laughs aloud.

INT/HER ROOM AT THE MOMBASA CLUB-DAY

Very hot. She's facedown on the bed, toying with the dog on the floor. He's cheerfully naked, drinking lager on a balcony overlooking the ocean, Fort Jesus. Mosquito netting in a ball over the bed, unsuspended.

She's awkward here: there's so much she doesn't know. And for him, she's still his childhood friend--but for her, he's the man she's about to marry.

KAREN

He's killed elephants. Several,
he said.

BROR

Several?! More like several
hundred--he does ivory.

KAREN

(beat)

Are you happy?

BROR

When we get out of the heat--
it's cooler in Nairobi.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

13/

BROR (cont'd)

(beat)

There's a party at Finch-Hatton's tomorrow. For Prince Wilhelm, really, but I thought it could do for us as well.

KAREN

I'd have a prince at my reception.
(she rolls over)
Tell me what I'm like.

BROR

(grins)

You seem to like it best on top.

Embarrassed, she rolls over again.

KAREN

Tell me how you want me to be then.

BROR

(kidding)

Less eager, I think--you frighten the dog.

(beat)

Is it strange--having been with twins?

She gets up to light a cigarette, defensive.

KAREN

It lacks variety, if that's what you mean.

BROR

(grins)

Sorry.

KAREN

You could tell me about the farm.

BROR

It's a surprise. I haven't done anything about a ring, d'you care?

KAREN

Did you think I wouldn't come?

BROR

I didn't know if you'd want to spend the money.

Moment. She's hurt by the lack of romance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

19/

KAREN

Does it bother you--about Hans?

BROR

No reason it should.

A naked glance from her.

KAREN

Does Farah eat dogs?

BROR

Good Lord, no! He's Muslim--
they won't even touch 'em.

He touches her, a sexual overture, but she's diffident: things
aren't as she hoped they'd be.

KAREN

Who is it that marries us?

BROR

The D.C.'ll do it. Before the
train.

(grins)

The desk says you're married
already. Barchness.

He kisses her neck.

KAREN

Where will Farah sleep tonight?

BROR

I don't know. Somewhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

20/

Preemptory, he slips his hand inside her gown, kisses her, his hand possessive on her hip. Her eyes are open.

EXT/THE OPEN PLAIN-DAY-VERY WIDE

Impala, Thomson's gazelle, giraffe, ostrich. On the horizon, small, the moving train. Looming beyond: Kilimanjaro.

MOVING WITH THE TRAIN

Karen with Farah on the open platform of the last car, drinking it in, glancing at Farah. Now, solemn, he points.

TWO RHINO, jogging, alert, uncertain.

ON THE PLATFORM

Berkeley comes out to join them, speaks over the clatter.

BERKELEY

It's quite vast, isn't it?

(she nods)

I s'pose it's Twiga I love best.
Giraffe? Like great flowers
floating on the grass. They're
quite awkward, really, but they're
such fine ladies you never think
to look at their feet so when
they move, it's as though they
aren't connected to anything
a'tall.

She's captured by his speech, so:

BERKELEY (cont'd)

Sorry. It's difficult out here.

Words . . .

(he shrugs)

She turns back to watch, puts her hand in his belt to steady herself.

EXT/OUTSIDE PARKLANDS, FINCH-EATON'S HOUSE-DAY

Several Kikuyu in European castoffs hold horses, mind carriages. A Model T CHUGS UP, the natives as wary as their plunging horses. Ignoring the commotion, a HUGE MAN extricates himself, moves ponderously to the party on the lawn.

ON THE LAWN-MOVING

Buffet tables, punch bowls, pink gins on silver trays, silent servants. Children run, two boys fight hard, ignored. A BLARE of BAGPIPES. A bottle is thrown.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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Astounding variety in dress: uniforms, morning coats, khaki, kilts, caftans, every sort of hat and helmet on both sexes. Fly-whisks on many wrists; women with revolvers on their hips; a drink in every hand.

About the settlers throughout: in costume and setting, always the coincidence of luxury and deprivation: battered boots beneath a Paris gown, fine wine in a tin cup, elegance at odds with some shabby detail.

Two men on horseback, fresh from polo, drift through the party, drinking, playing croquet with their polo mallets. One horse bumps a woman; she gives it a stiff elbow, her chat uninterrupted.

A vivacious woman, her neck and jaw scarred by claws.

A young woman, a man twice her age, talk covertly, assignation in the air. Nearby, a man urinates in the flowerbeds, back turned discreetly.

In a mixed group, a man drapes his arm around a woman, drops ice in her bodice, reaches after it. She laughs, doesn't oppose his fumbling.

Prince Wilhelm among reserved civil servants, appalled at the undisciplined settlers.

And Karen in a group of women (one with an ear trumpet), out of place in fashionable hat and hose, her superior bearing ignored in their circle of fun.

WITH BROR IN A GROUP OF MEN

DELAMERE

So you'll be staying home now, Blix?

A MAN

There's that American girl with the teeth.

SECOND MAN

(to the first)

And your wife, a'course.

Their laughter dying as Karen joins them.

DELAMERE

We're saying it's good you've come, Baroness--there's some who doubted your existence.

KAREN

(cool)

Perhaps they'll reconsider.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

21-A/

SECOND MAN

Is there something we can call
you that gets us round this
"Baroness?"

KAREN

(chilly)

I'm sure there must be . . . I
don't seem to find our host.

BROR

He's off God knows.

FIRST MAN

Down in the Mara last month.

KAREN

And leaves you the house?!

DELAMERE

Decent fellow, Denys. I think
he's gone to London for some
music.

ON BROR AND KAREN-PRIVATE

BROR

It won't pay, being grand here,
Tanne.

KAREN

(stiff)

I believe you're right.

INT/THE HOUSE-LATER

O.S., the NOISE of the PARTY. Karen's wandering in the den.
Books all about, native art, a huge elephant tusk, a half
dozen hats, memorabilia of Eton, Oxford, photographs of two
women, a littered desk, some sheet music, a dehydrated orange.
A gun cabinet, a dozen rifles, shotguns. As she's about to
touch one, O.S., a sharp TSK-TSK, a warning.

ON KANUTHIA

Denys's gunbearer. He's Turkana, an ivory plug in his lower
lip, small, wild, in shorts.

WIDER

KAREN

I was just--

(sharp)

Are you speaking to me?

Her arrogance lacks confidence; he's not intimidated. She
stalks out with what dignity she can muster.

EXT/A TWO-TRACK THROUGH THE HILLS-DAY

Bror and Karen, riding. Behind them, an ox-wagon loaded with her crates and barrels, Farah and a native driver in charge. On both sides of the track, Kikuyu plant seedlings, stare as they pass.

BROR

What do you think?

KAREN

Is that tea?

BROR

(grins)

Those are your cows. I bought coffee instead.

She's flabbergasted. As he rides on:

KAREN

God damn it, Bror!

But he doesn't turn.

EXT/APPROACHING THE HOUSE-DAY

A substantial stone bungalow surrounded by a wide lawn, goat-cropped. A separate kitchen. Kikuyu women carrying huge loads of firewood stare. Now from the manyattas in the b.g. flow several hundred Kikuyu, the children running, laughing, until they're near and fall silent.

The Kikuyu press close, solemn, crowding her horse. She's apprehensive, turns back in her saddle to Bror.

KAREN

Is this all right?

He nods, SPEAKS LOUDLY to the Kikuyu in Swahili. There's a great laugh from them.

KAREN

(fighting her horse)

What did you say?

BROR

I said they frightened you.

Irritated, she puts her horse smartly forward, the Kikuyu falling back. Bror SPEAKS again in Swahili.

THE KIKUYU

(not in unison)

Jambo, nemsaab.

AT THE HOUSE

She dismounts, boys eager to hold her horse. Waiting, old Isa, the cook, and young JUMA, the houseboy, in a fez. As she goes to the house, the Kikiyu give way.

A child clutches her mother's leg, dark-eyed. Karen kneels, speaks softly. A HUSH.

The child is curious, afraid. Her mother pushes her forward. Karen takes the child's hand, puts it through her soft hair. The child's enthralled.

Karen picks her up, stands. There's a rumble of approval.

KAREN'S POV

23/

Bror, mounted, watching his wife. He's not smiling.

BROR'S POV

Karen's looking at him, not the child. And she's defiant.

INT/THE HOUSE-NIGHT

Furnished just with Bror's necessities. Thick candles light a bare table. They're eating; Karen's flushed with wine. Juma's stationed at the wall.

KAREN

You don't know anything about coffee!

BROR

You plant it, it grows.

KAREN

We said we'd do cattle. My family thinks we'll--

BROR

Your family doesn't care whether it's cows or coffee as long as the money comes. You've got to be with a hard or things go wrong. I didn't come here to sit with the bloody things.

(shrugs)

Just tell them I changed my mind.

KAREN

The next time you change your mind, remember where the money comes from.

BROR

They bought you a title, Baronessa --they didn't buy me.

Moment. Idly, Karen touches the candle flame with her finger, licks it. Then:

KAREN

Juma? Go fetch some wine--

(he's off)

For my lover's brother.

Bror looks at her, very cold, wipes his mouth.

BROR

Don't be a child.

He leaves the table, passes by her on the way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

24/

KAREN

Did I tell you Hans came to
say goodbye?

He lunges for her, grabs her hair tight, close to the head,
yanks her to her feet; she's on her toes.

BROR

(close, in Swedish)
Some day you'll go too far.

He shoves her away, knocking her into the table. She comes
at him with the candle, wax dripping. He knocks it away,
SWEARING, batting at his pants. A furious look between them,
dominance at issue. Slow, he comes for her--but she might
spring at him! In a flash, he has her, kisses her brutally
. . and she kisses him back! tries to match his strength:
but for her size, she'd force him to the floor.

They break, gleaming with sexual combat, utterly equal. He
reaches for her shirt; she knocks his hand away, yanks her
shirt open, fumbles with the buttons at her cuffs.

She pushes past him to the door, pulling off her shirt, past
Juma, returned with decanted wine. Bror follows her.
Undismissed, Juma rights her glass. He's pouring her wine
when, O.S., a dull THUD (of a body or bodies against furniture
or a wall), her small YELP, either hurt or passion. Juma
doesn't spill a drop.

EXT/THE HOUSE-DAY

Kikiyu children play, tend goats on the lawn. Farah directs
natives moving barrels from the wagon to the house. Karen
comes onto the terrace, sipping tea.

Work stops. Farah comes to her, uneasy.

KAREN

Where is Baron Blixen?

FARAH

He is gone to hunt, msabu. By
Samburu.

KAREN

When will he be back?

FARAH

He says he will come before
the rain, msabu.

She looks at the clear sky, so Farah does, too.

KAREN

Is it going to rain today?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

25/

FARAH

No, msabu. It will be many days
before it rains, I think.

A flicker of fear. She sips her tea.

EXT/A FIELD OF YOUNG COFFEE-DAY

Karen, walking her horse, with BELKNAP, 40-50, the American
farm manager, in a row of new-planted seedlings.

BELKNAP

--Maybe a hundred ton. Depending.

KAREN

Depending on what?

BELKNAP

Depending on Africa, Miz Blixen.

KAREN

When do we harvest?

BELKNAP

Dunno yet.

KAREN

How can you not know?!

BELKNAP

These are seedlings: it's a couple
years anyway. What season they'll
bear in?

(shrugs)

Nobody's ever planted coffee this
high.

KAREN

(incredulous)

Where does the money come from
while we wait?

BELKNAP

(stops walking)

If you ain't got it, Miz Blixen,
be good if you'd tell me now.

She can't believe what Bror's done. But now she laughs.

KAREN

Do you write to your mother,
Mister Belknap?

Half-furnished. Karen puts books on a shelf. Farah and Juma are in conference at a crate they're unpacking.

FARAH

(holding out a book)
Msabu? What people are these?

A colored plate in a medical book: a schematic drawing of a man--organs, muscles, veins in different colors.

KAREN

That is how all people are inside.
(taps Juma's chest)
In here.

Grave, Farah and Juma look down at themselves, to her, to each other. No way. With dignity, they accept the fact that msabu is seriously disturbed.

CLOSE-DOZENS OF CARTRIDGE CASES ON THE GROUND

The heap increasing as she FIRES (O.S.). Her small GRUNT (O.S.) each time the rifle batters her shoulder.

INT/DINING ROOM-NIGHT

She's alone with her dinner, reading by a kerosene lamp, Juma silent against the wall.

EXT/THE TERRACE-DAY

Karen and Farah by a table holding a medical bag, bottles, bandages. She puts drops in the eyes of a man squatting on his heels. Other patients, waiting, think this is very funny.

INT/DRAWING ROOM-DAY

Fully furnished now, open to the terrace. Beneath a cuckoo clock, a small BOY waits, very solemn. He SPEAKS to the clock in sing-song Swahili. Nothing. He SPEAKS again. Reaching the quarter-hour, the clock CUCKOOES. The bird vanishes. The boy waits to be sure it won't reappear, bobs, leaves.

EXT/THE HOUSE-DAY-WIDE

First light, misty and still. Karen rides away from the house.

EXT/THE WILD COUNTRY-A SERIES OF SHOTS

To show the game as she rides, suggesting the Eden which Kenya then was. Today, the abundance is gone but the variety remains: fifteen minutes from Nairobi is a reserve inhabited by lion, cheetah, rhino, elephant, giraffe, eland, waterbuck, hippo, warthog, wildebeest, baboon, kongoni, zebra, impala, bushbuck, crocodile, ostrich, Thomson's and Grant's gazelles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

27/

To be included: the sense of a killing ground--torn earth dark with blood, scattered bone, the remains of a carcass--a feeling of Africa, not Sambi.

And Karen, not communing with nature but tense, alert.

EXT/A HILLSIDE-DAY

Karen sits elbows to knees, scanning the plain below with binoculars. Her horse, ground-tied, browses a distance away, her rifle in a saddle scabbard.

She strains to see something; O.S., the horse WHICKERS. She ignores it.

A black-maned lion, bloody to the ears, not thirty yards away, coming slowly, ambling through the grass.

The horse WHINNIES, bolts a few yards, turns to look.

She looks to the horse, then opposite.

The lion, closer, dead still, staring at her.

A long moment. She stares back, starts to move, doesn't. She's very frightened but now, disgusted, too, that there's no right thing to do.

The lion starts to come closer; she scrambles to her feet; he stops. Moment, then:

KAREN

You'd better take me now:
I'll take you, if I can
find you again.

Moment. This lion has eaten, doesn't want the work of killing her. A ridiculous stand-off.

KAREN (cont'd)

(low)

To hell with you then.

She turns, walks toward her horse, stumbles just a bit, wants badly to look back, won't, shoulders hunched against the blow that must be coming.

Nearing her horse, she suddenly runs the last few yards, startles the horse, has to lunge, clumsy, to wrestle her rifle from the scabbard, whirl, aim blindly, squeeze.

CLICK.

No sign of life, utterly peaceful, the lion vanished.

WITH HER

An appalling performance; she ought to be long dead. She opens the action of her rifle.

CLOSE ON THE MAGAZINE-EMPTY

EXT/A GRASSY FIELD-DAY

Karen's riding slowly home. Ahead, a Kikuyu boy (KAMANTE) tends goats, hobbles on a crude crutch. His face is angular, like a cat's, ugly sores on his leg. He seems both frail, wise as the elders. As she reaches him, stops:

KAREN

Your leg is very sick.

(no response)

Tomorrow, you must come to the house for medicine.

(no response)

If you do not come, the other boys will say you are afraid.

(he could care)

I myself will only think that you are foolish.

That is another matter. Karen rides on, turns:

KAREN (cont'd)

Tell me your name.

(CONTINUED)

KAMANTE
I am Kamante.

INT/DINING ROOM-NIGHT

Alone again, bored with her book, picking at her food, Juma at the wall. In time:

KAREN
Farah!
(when he appears)
I think we will go to town tomorrow.

FARAH
Yes, msabu.
(then)
Msabu? Do you think you will go again to be where there are lions?

KAREN
Oh, yes.

He doesn't like that, his sigh heavy with disapproval.

EXT/ON THE TERRACE-DAY

Dawn, still gray, and Kamante, stork-legged, waiting with African patience, too early, alone.

INT/HER BEDROOM-DAY

Overdressed at the prince's reception, she's now trying for a colonial planter look, a split skirt, khaki shirt, with and without a scarf, just so.

EXT/ON THE TERRACE-LATER

Farah is waiting with a mule wagon. As she crosses the terrace, Kamante, three others, wait for the medical hour she's forgotten.

KAREN
I have to go to town today.
You must come back tomorrow.

The others accept that, begin to move off. Kamante darkens.

KAMANTE
Mamsaab.
(on her turn)
You say I am foolish not to come. So I have come.

A bold speech: the others react; she does, too. Then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

29/

KAREN

You're rude. But you have a point. Farah?

MINUTES LATER

She has cotton, alcohol. The leg is ugly.

KAREN

This will hurt.

She treats him. Once, his eyes flicker, nothing more.

INT/THE LADIES LOUNGE AT MUTHAIGA CLUB-DAY

Busy. Women, a few men, in twos and threes at low tables. Waiters bring tea, drinks. Only Karen sits alone; she has a stack of mail but would rather someone spoke to her. From the marked doorway to the men's bar comes CONVIVIAL NOISE (O.S.)

Three women look her way as they leave, murmur. A tall blonde (IDINA), confident, detaches, comes to stand over Karen.

IDINA

Excuse me. You're the Baroness von Blixen, aren't you?

KAREN

(ready for a friend)

Yes?

IDINA

Do tell Eror we miss him in town.

KAREN

He's been hunting.

IDINA

So I'm told. Do tell him, will you?

KAREN

May I say who it is who misses him?

IDINA

I'm Idina. Lady Sackville, actually --they say you're fond of honorifics.

She returns to her titillated friends. HOLD ON KAREN, humiliated.

EXT/MOVING WITH THE WAGON-DAY

30/

Sundown. Karen and Farah on the wagon box. She's bleak.

FARAH

It can rain some day now.

She'll study him, covert. She's thinking: my only friend is black, a servant. And I don't know him.

INT/THE KITCHEN-DAY

Sweat-stained, in shorts, Karen works with Esa, teaching him to make croissants. Now with a broad smile (his first), Farah's at the door. More to Esa than to her:

FARAH

Bedar comes now.

Karen's a bit miffed at the alacrity with which they leave her.

EXT/FROM THE TERRACE-DAY-WIDE

Riding up the road, Berkeley and DENYS FINCH-HATTON, with Karen's natives trotting beside, bantering, adoring of the visitors. Trudging behind, Kanuthia, with two rifles, muzzles down, followed by a mule-drawn wagon. Farah and Esa hike down the road. Berkeley waves to Karen, CALLS.

NEW ANGLE-AS THEY ARRIVE

Much fuss over Bedar (that's Denys); everyone loves him and he knows them all. Berkeley goes to Karen, grinning:

BERKELEY

Are you sick to death of visitors?

Impulsive, she hugs him, holds him a moment long.

BERKELEY (cont'd)

Apparently not. May I present my friend Denys Finch-Hatton.

He's 27, but so courtly, so gentle, that his age is hard to fix. His manner's grave, but there's a glint of the devil in his eye, the amused detachment of a spectator. He's the sort you hope might ask you for a favor, though you know he never will.

Mannish (for that time), she extends her hand; he doesn't let it go.

KAREN

I've been to your house.

(CONTINUED)

DENYS

Is it too much--to hope that
you might sing?

KAREN

Good Lord--I've failed you already.

DENYS

You're a storyteller then.

KAREN

I happen to be very good at
stories.

DENYS

I'd like to stay then. If that's
all right.

But Juma's come unbidden, to Denys, with champagne and glasses
on a silver tray: Mistress Karen's not in charge. While Denys
inspects the label, jokes with Juma in Swahili, Karen gives
Berkeley a look; he just shrugs and grins.

BERKELEY

(to her)

Too long in the bush.

KAREN

(to both)

Error's off hunting.

They know that, and why; the whole colony does.

DENYS

So you can tell your secrets.

KAREN

But then they wouldn't be mine.

Denys sips his champagne, studies her openly, very frank.
Grave, but there's a hint of self-mockery:

DENYS

It's hard, I think--when you're
lovely--to know just who to trust.

BERKELEY

(to save her)

Come see our winnings, Karen.

WITH KAREN AND DENYS

As they walk to the wagon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

32/

DENYS

Blix calls you Tanne.

KAREN

We were children together.

DENYS

I think it's too . . . Nordic;
you're not that bold.

(beat)

May I call you Tania instead?

She looks at him sharply, doesn't respond, looks away. Then:

KAREN

My father called me that.

AT THE WAGON

Loaded with dozens of elephant tusks. Kanuthia's eyes
remember her but he gives no sign. Denys peels an orange.

KAREN

(even)

It's a business then.

DENYS

(neutral)

Would you rather kill for sport?

BERKELEY

We've shot you a rug, too.
Kanuthia! Bring the lion.

As always, Kanuthia looks to Denys--no other--for approval.
He nods. Kanuthia goes to the wagon, returns with a lion
skin, still wet, spreads it on the ground.

KAREN

You've shot my lion!

BERKELEY

He was taking cattle.

KAREN

He let me live. Two days ago.

BERKELEY

(truly sorry)

I'm sorry. We didn't know.

KAREN

It's not that.

(a short laugh)

I wanted him for myself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

33/

DENYS

(calm)

Do you always fight so much?

She looks at him, startled, then nods. He divides the orange, gives her half. As though puzzled:

DENYS

But it's fun we're here for.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

Under DENYS'S VOICE, clear, SINGING Handel.

--On the lawn in late afternoon, in chairs, drinking champagne, the three in slow conversation. Denys watches her as though he has a theory and seeks confirmation. She feels it.

--At dinner. Karen's in a gown, Denys wears a burnoose, Berkeley's in Bror's dinner jacket, too large. The table's elegant, her best things; both Farah and Juma serve while Esa fusses at the door. She watches Denys with no theory at all.

--In the living room. Berkeley and Denys are telling the same story, laughing, drinking.

--Later, with a fire now. Karen's on the floor in silk pajamas. She imitates a lioness, gathering, twitching, intent, then lazy, stretching, flopping in the grass. Denys is captivated. Now she does an olive baboon, jerky, eating, now moves to Berkeley, grooms him; he laughs madly, ticklish.

--Later. Floor pillows and brandy. Berkeley's eyes are for Karen but hers are for Denys as he stands almost formally at the mantle, SINGING.

EXT/THE NGONG HILLS-DAY

Dawn, gray, the sky just going pink.

EXT/OUTSIDE THE HOUSE-DAY

Denys and Berkeley in their bush clothes, unshaven and bleary, ready to ride, Kanuthia silent with the guns, the wagon driver (Bilea) dozing on the box. Karen's in a robe.

KAREN

(with Berkeley)

I want you to come here often.

BERKELEY

(suddenly shy)

I should like that very much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

34/

She'd kiss him, but very formally, he kisses her hand, goes to his horse. His hand firm on her shoulder, Denys walks her to his horse.

DENYS

You have to see this country,
you know.

KAREN

I'll make Bror take me.

DENYS

Or I could show you.

KAREN

(beat)

Goodbye, Finch-Hatton.

DENYS

Will you be all right?

She nods. He'd kiss her now but she touches his face, turns away. He watches her go; she doesn't look back.

A MINUTE LATER

The procession moves off in the dawn. As they recede, Denys and Berkeley, in close harmony, SING Wild Colonial Boy.

THE SAME MOMENT, ON THE TERRACE

Karen, smoking, gazing up at the cloud-covered hills. Over their fading SONG (O.S.), the sound of RAIN on a roof (V.C.)

INT/DRAWING ROOM-DAY

Karen writes a letter, the RAIN heavy on the roof (O.S.) and now a BANGING (O.S.) at the front door. She goes.

Farah's opened the door to a half-naked KIKIYU, drenched.

KIKIYU

Swana Blixen comes now. In the
forest.

Farah looks to Karen, apprehensive.

INT/THE LIVING ROOM-LATER

Karen's in boots, a poncho, taking her rifle from the gun cabinet, cartridges from a drawer below.

FARAH

Msabu--

She brushes past him.

EXT/IN THE FOREST-DAY

35/

Karen trudges in the rain, rifle slung muzzle down.

EXT/A TWO-TRACK IN THE FOREST-DAY

Dark, very wet. Bror, mounted, tired, trailed by a mule wagon, scattered bearers, a sorry bunch.

BROR'S POV

Well ahead, standing across the two-track, framed by dense wet forest, Karen, soaked, her rifle at her waist.

NEW ANGLE

As he reaches her. FAVOR HER, staring up, drenched.

BROR

(quiet)

What are you doing, Tanne?

KAREN

Penance.

(wipes her face)

I want you to come home.

He dismounts, takes her gun, leads his horse, his arm around her shoulders.

EXT/ON THE TERRACE-DAY

Medical hour. Karen's treating a burned child; Kamante's next in line. Bror's just awake, with a mug of tea.

BROR

You've made yourself a home.

(she's grateful)

Did Denys say anything about the war?

KAREN

Just that it's coming.

(beat)

Will you fight?

BROR

If the Germans cross the border.

Did you like Denys?

She's finished with the child, unwraps Kamante's bandage.

KAREN

Yes.

(then)

Lady Sackville said to tell you they miss you in town.

BROR

He's a fine shot, Denys.

The leg is worse.

KAREN

This leg is very sick. It should go to the hospital.

KAMANTE

(grave)

This leg may be foolish. It may think not to go to the hospital.

KAREN

This leg will do as it pleases. If it wants to be eaten up by worms, that is not for me to say. But if you will take this foolish leg to the hospital, and keep it there until it is strong, I will think that you are wise and have done a good thing. Such a wise man as that I would want to work in my house, for wages.

KAMANTE

How much wages would come to such a wise man as that?

KAREN

More wages than come of tending goats.

KAMANTE

(considers this)

I will talk to this leg then.

EXT/THE COFFEE FIELDS-DAY

Karen and Bror, with Belknap, who's explaining the pruning process. Karen asks questions, is interested; Bror's bored.

EXT/A POND-DAY-WIDE

Sundown. It's pastoral, the pond ringed by marshy hummocks, beautiful in the dying light. No life visible but the ducks returning home, CALLING. Suddenly, Bror and Karen stand into view, shooting right and left: ducks plummet into the water. A native boy plunges in to fetch them.

INT/THE DINING ROOM AT MUTHAIGA-NIGHT

Karen, eating dinner with Lord Delamere and his WIFE. Now Bror returns to the table. She smiles at him, touches his wrist as the conversation continues.

The rough gardens of a low white-washed building. Karen is turning Kamante over to a nun, whose costume he carefully studies. Karen touches him as she leaves; he hobbles away with the nun, turns to stare after her.

EXT/A RIVER RAVINE-DAY

Above a chute of water, a lioness watches two cubs experiment with the river. PAN DOWN the chute to FIND clothes, a picnic on a rock, then Bror's rifle, finally Bror and Karen, lazing in the pool below the fall.

INT/DINING ROOM-NIGHT

Bror and Karen in the midst of scattered gear--cook kit, medical supplies, bush clothing, ammunition--which they're packing into safari boxes. Farah comes and goes with more.

KAREN

Sweden's neutral, so is Denmark.
You don't have to go--you want to.

BROR

How do you think it would be at
the club if I didn't?

KAREN

I'm not so fond of the club I'd
have you shot for it.

BROR

I'll more likely get chewed on
than shot: we're gathering
intelligence for the army, that's
all.

KAREN

A thousand rounds?

BROR

I don't know how long we'll be.

KAREN

Delamere will fight first chance.

BROR

I'll tell him you said not to.
The farm can take care of itself
--you've got Belknap.

KAREN

The farm does not take care of
itself--I take care of it. With
small help from him. And that's
not the point.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

38/

KAREN (cont'd)
I didn't expect to like you so much, that's all.

BROR
(grins)
You're not going to go falling in love?

KAREN
Not with someone who's always leaving.

EXT/OUTSIDE THE HOUSE-DAY

Dawn. Delamere, several white men, mounted, with pack mules, a few natives. Bror checks the hitches on his animals.

DELAMERE
You'll tend the home fires, Karen?

KAREN
I haven't decided yet.

Delamere laughs. Bror goes to Karen.

BROR
I'll try not to be long.
(she kisses his cheek)
That's a fine kiss goodbye!

KAREN
I'm better at hello.

Bror mounts, they move off. Karen goes to the house, can't help looking back.

INT/DRAWING ROOM-DAY

Karen's at her desk, working on the farm's books. At the terrace doors, the cuckoo clock Boy with another his age and a YOUNGER CHILD. They edge into the room. Now Farah comes with a strong-eyed youth (ISMAIL), beautiful and brave.

FARAH
Msabu. This Kikiyu is called Ismail. When you go into the forest or where there are lions, he will bring your rifles.

The younger child reaches for a figurine on a table; the older boy slaps his hand.

KAREN
I don't need him to bring my rifles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

39/

FARAH

It may be so, msabu. But he
will bring the rifles.

The three children wait beneath the clock, the one boy
CHANTING under his breath in Swahili.

KAREN

How much are we paying for this
service which I do not need?

FARAH

Five rupees, msabu.

KAREN

That's too much.

FARAH

It may be so, msabu. But if
sometime you are torn in pieces
and this Kikiyu is not dead also,
then he must always be gone from
this place for the fear that I
can kill him. So I think it is
not too much.

KAREN

Perhaps not. Very well, Ismail.

The clock CUCKOOES. The children stare, the two impressed
with their leader. As they leave, he bows gravely, SAYS
"Asante, memsaab" and the youngest child, dragged by the
hand, turns back to PIPPI: "Asante, memsaab."

EXT/ON THE TERRACE-DAY

Karen's at tea, confronting the YOUNG OFFICER, regular army,
who stands before her.

OFFICER

It's for your own safety, ma'am.
We'll just escort you into town.

KAREN

I've been to town! It's interment,
that's what it is.

OFFICER

With our men off to war, it's--

KAREN

Do you think the Germans want to
grow coffee?

OFFICER

It's the native element concerns us.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN

All we've done is take their land
and tax them half to death--do you
think they don't love us?

OFFICER

I'm to move white women and their
children off the farms.

KAREN

I'm a Danish subject.

OFFICER

Women and children, ma'am.

KAREN

Is that one category, or two?

OFFICER

We've also had a message from
your husband. He wants you to
send a white man with a wagon.
They need paraffin and tinned
food.

KAREN

Where would my husband like this
white man and his wagon sent?

OFFICER

He's on the border, ma'am.
Somewhere.

(beat)

We'll come for you in two days
then.

KAREN

I may be late, Lieutenant: I'm
female.

OFFICER

(grinning)

Yes, ma'am, that's very clear. And
I'm a captain, ma'am.

A smart salute and he's gone. Karen seethes, then:

KAREN

Farah Aden!!

EXT/THE OPEN PLAIN-DAY

A freight wagon pulled by sixteen oxen. Farah, Juma, Ismail
and three Kikuyu walk, ride on the wagon, drive two spare
oxen. Karen rides ahead.

She's sweating, swiping at the flies.

EXT/A DRY STREAM BED-DAY

41/

Eyes rolling, flanks heaving, the great oxen lunge, stumble in the spans, struggle for purchase to haul the wagon up the crumbling bank; around them, the natives SHOUT, use their whips.

Karen watches, her heart with the oxen.

EXT/CAMP-NIGHT

Exhausted, Karen sleeps near the fire. Now the guttural COUGH of a lion, very near: her eyes fly open, she doesn't move.

FARAH (O.S.)

Simba. Ewana Simba.

ANGLE ADJUSTS to include Farah nearby, vigilant. Karen MUTTERS "blcody hell", rolls over back to sleep.

EXT/THE OPEN PLAIN-WIDE

The ox train against the late afternoon sun. PAN TO FIND Ismail and Juma, and Karen, sitting, elbows braced on knees to steady her rifle. A herd of Thomson's gazelle browse at distance. Ismail's optimistic: his knife is drawn. Juma's dubious. ZOOM IN on a Tommy. The CRACK (O.S.) of her rifle: it drops like a stone.

Ismail WHOOPS off to the gazelle. Karen jacks the spent shell from her rifle, hands the gun to Juma.

EXT/CAMP-NIGHT

MOVING around the fire: one by one, the six blacks, eating, joking (not Farah) in Swahili. And the Baroness von Blixen, dirty, face greasy with the meat, squatting like a native on her heels. She's absorbed, happy.

EXT/THE NIGHT SKY

TILT DOWN TO FIND Karen lying on her back. O.S., two of the Kikuyu CROON to calm the oxen.

KAREN

You never eat meat that hasn't been blad?

FARAH

The book of Allah forbids it.

KAREN

It is also forbidden for men to wear silk, but I have seen you do it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

42/

FARAH

(considers this)

Well, msabu--it is only a book.

She grins.

FARAH (cont'd)

A foolish Kikiyu has told me this: in white countries, a man does not pay to take a wife.

KAREN

This Kikiyu knows more than you.

FARAH

This Kikiyu has even said to me that a father will pay rupees to a man who takes his daughter.

KAREN

(on her elbow)

What's wrong with that?

FARAH

Msabu: these are very ugly daughters if a father will pay to be rid of them.

The logic plain, the point close to home. Juma SPEAKS to Farah in Swahili, indicates the sky, Farah AGREES.

KAREN

What are you saying?

FARAH

Juma says this sky at this place is like the bottom of the sea.

KAREN

What does Juma know about the bottom of the sea?

FARAH

It is a common thing, msabu, to sleep at night and think about the sea. British do not do this?

KAREN

Even British. It's called dreaming.

(CONTINUED)

FARAH
We do this also.

KAREN
What is it like in the sea then.

FARAH
It is like here, msabu. But there is water.

KAREN
There are trees?

FARAH
Yes.

KAREN
And oxen?

FARAH
Yes.

KAREN
Are there giraffe in the sea?

FARAH
Yes, msabu. Many giraffes.

KAREN
Farah: no one has ever seen a giraffe in the sea.

FARAH
(stirs the fire,
considers this)
Msabu . . do you think here there are leopards?

KAREN
Yes.

FARAH
Have you seen this leopard?

KAREN
(starts to laugh)
No.

FARAH
There are giraffes in the sea.

EXT/THE OPEN PLAIN-DAY

Noon camp. Karen's under a makeshift shelter, eating lunch. Farah stares at the horizon.

Far off, an intermittent glint of sun on metal, no more.

LATER

44/

Dismantling the shelter. Farah looks again at the horizon, SPEAKS sharply to Ismail, who goes to the wagon for Karen's rifle, checks it. Karen shades her eyes to look.

KAREN

What is it?

(no response)

LATER

Very quiet. All watch the horizon. One Kikiyu leans on the back of an ox. Karen's standing on the wagon box to see, looks down at Farah, quizzical. He's bleak.

FARAH

Masai.

TELEPHOTO

Pulled together by the long lens, appearing to run on water, a half dozen Masai, young warriors, lope easily along, naked, slim spears shining in the sun.

NOON CAMP-QUICK CUTS

--Karen, fingering her rifle, Ismail with her shotgun.

--A Kikiyu, nostrils flared, scenting the wind.

--Juma, sitting in the shade of the wagon with a panga (machete)

--A Kikiyu, wiping the muzzles of the oxen with water, staring.

THE MASAI

Wildest of the wild, carrying huge shields like feathers, penises tied to thighs with thongs. Some of the warriors bleed lightly from thorn scratches.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The camp in the f.g. The Masai cross no more than fifty yards ahead, hewing to their crow-flies line of march.

KAREN'S POV

The Masai look at the camp as they pass, their manner so bold and indifferent that it's contemptuous. One YIPS a wild sound. They recede.

THE CAMP

Relaxes. Karen watches the Masai go, curious. Now that danger's past, she'd like them to stay awhile.

EXT/THE OPEN PLAIN-DAY

The wagon, moving again. ANGLE ADJUSTS TO FIND LIONS at a slow trot paralleling the wagon. Are they following?

A low corral of thorn bushes contains the restless oxen. To one side, a low fire, sleeping forms. A Kikuyu moves round the corral with a lantern. In a flash, a lion moves THROUGH FOREGROUND, then it's still.

AT THE FIRE

Karen, others, asleep. Now, O.S., the horrible BAWL of an injured ox. An explosion of action as all run for the wagon and corral, Karen SHOUTING for Ismail, CURSING.

AT THE WAGON

Karen tears into it in a fury, looking for her rifle, can't find it. The oxen make a TERRIBLE NOISE (O.S.) She snatches a stock whip, runs for the corral.

WITH KAREN

Tearing at the thorn bushes to break into the corral. Thorns rip at her clothes, arms, face. The SNARL of the lions (O.S.)

IN THE CORRAL

A lion flees, jumping the corral; another's battling an ox. Ismail's behind Karen now, trying to give her the rifle but too late: Karen's at the lion with the whip. It whirls, may come for her, but she's attacking: CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! And Ismail, beside himself, runs at the lion, swinging the rifle like a club. The lion swipes at him, leaps gracefully out of the corral.

Karen's dazed, wipes her face, licks the blood on her hand. Ismail wants to give her the rifle; she exaggerates a look, then grins. Others are quieting the oxen. Farah gives Ismail a fierce stare, shakes his head at Karen. The others are awed.

WITH THE OX

Bleeding, fatally mauled. She ASKS for Juma's knife, strokes the ox's head, takes its ear. Her hand moves BELOW FRAME, jerks: the ox BAWLS; there's a fine spray of blood in the air as it slumps from view. She hands Juma his knife:

KAREN

I have bled your ox. You can take the hide.

She leaves the corral, a mess, bleeding, her pants covered with the gore of the ox. Alone, she'd vomit now, doesn't.

AT THE FIRE-LATER

Farah treats the deep thorn scratches on her naked back. We cannot see her face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

46/

Farah wears the ghost of a smile. As he treats her:

FARAH

We must have this ox for the wagon.
But this simba must have this ox
to eat. Msabu sneaks to this simba:
do not bite this ox or I can whip
you with my little whip.

(Karen starts to laugh)

This simba thinks: this memsaab is
not right: it may be she is a witch:
I can eat this ox another time. Now
msabu thinks: I can kill this ox
with Juma's knife: Ha, ha, simba.

(Farah's grinning)

Now this ox is dead! This simba is
hungry! And we have no ox for the
wagon!

(very funny; in time)

God is happy, msabu. He plays with
us.

EXT/DELAMERE'S CAMP-DAY-MOVING

Past several tents. White men ride in, depart, question blacks.
Natives at chores, some female. Gently, NOTICE a beautiful
girl, Somali or Galla, strolling, without a task. HOLD ON
DELAMERE at a map-littered campaign desk. A man on horseback
points. Delamere takes binoculars, goes to look.

DELAMERE'S POV

The ox wagon approaching, a long way off.

ON DELAMERE

DELAMERE

(very dry)

We'd best tell Blix his wife's
arrived.

EXT/DELAMERE'S CAMP-LATER

A dozen white men in knockabout bush clothes, a few natives,
watch the wagon come in.

Karen looks horrible: sunburned, nose peeling, lips cracked,
clothes torn, hair matted, scabs on her face, arms, legs.
But she feels fine, doesn't understand why they're staring.
And they are. They're a tough bunch, don't say much, just
a word among themselves, but they're impressed. At the end
of their ragged line, Bror and Delamere.

DELAMERE

(quiet)

Hello, Karen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

47/

There are flies on her face; they no longer bother her.

KAREN

(quiet)

Hello, D. Hello, Bror.

BROR

You've changed your hair.

She laughs. They don't. She's lucky to be alive.

INT/BROR'S TENT-NIGHT

A tent, gear-strewn, but an old carpet, large rough pillows, make it feel a bit Arabic. Karen's clean, in his shirt, silk panties (like dance pants, then), boots. And she's changed, her masks put aside, her needs reduced. They drink from tin cups; there's a lot of moving around on the pillows.

BROR

You weren't frightened.

KAREN

(reflective)

There must have been a time
before you knew if you'd be
brave. And then something
would have happened . . .

BROR

Edgar Sundstrom. We fought one
day, on the ice.

KAREN

What did you learn?

BROR

That I wouldn't run away.

KAREN

What's that worth? Later.

BROR

Not much. There's always another
day.

KAREN

I think you've forgotten. I think
it may be worth a lot. It's not
different, the next time?

BROR

(beat)

Yes, I suppose it is.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN

There's something--permanent--
about whether you stand or run.
But women don't fight on the ice,
we get no chance to be cowards.
We never know if we're wolves or
rabbits. God. We're such twits.

BROR

There's childbirth. Grief. Dissent.
They all take courage.

KAREN

Those are different things, they
don't have claws. I could have
lived all my life and never once
been really at risk. Now I've
learned I may not run just because
I might be hurt. How's that, for
information?

(shakes her head)

It's not right, the way we're
kept safe. And small wonder we're
confused.

BROR

It was a very silly, very reckless
thing to do.

KAREN

And useful. And properly done.
And brave.

BROR

Those things, too.

KAREN

(flopping back)

God, I hope this war goes on
forever!

BROR

Tanne--I can't let you do this
again.

KAREN

(grins)

I've just had a go at a lion
with a whip: you may not scare
me much.

(beat)

I think I've been afraid you'd
leave me. Now . . .

(grins)

maybe we'll leave each other.

(CONTINUED)

BROR

Tanne--the next time? Something could happen.

KAREN

Now there's a reason to live: something might happen. I'll bet God thought of that.

BROR

What about the farm?

KAREN

(uncomfortable)

We've got Belknap.

BROR

Do you think he can do it?

KAREN

You could help--we could each do a half.

Grave, he shakes his head.

KAREN (cont'd)

I could force you--cut you off.

BROR

I'd just hunt professionally. I make do that anyway.

Moment. She's not angry. Something's different.

KAREN

Mother says she'll make us a loan until we've got a crop. But I've got to pay that back: that's Ea's money. Tommy's.

(beat)

You won't help at all.

BROR

No. I'm sorry.

KAREN

I'll work it out myself then. But you musn't tell me what to do.

(beat, he nods)

And you have to fix it so I'm not interned.

BROR

Delamere can do that, I think.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

50/

He's lying on some pillows; she straddles his waist.

KAREN

I like it that you're honest
with me.

BROR

I like you, too. Very much.

She bends to kiss him; his hands go under her shirt. We're
sure they'll make love.

EXT/AT THE FARM-DAY

Karen finishes work on the piping of the elevated cistern
behind the house, climbs down the ladder, steps to the ground:
her leg buckles. Puzzled, she takes a step, collapses like
a doll, sitting. She's baffled: her legs aren't working.

INT/HER BEDROOM-NIGHT

Kerosene light. She's in bed, wet with fever, not agitated
but semi-conscious, stupefied. Farah's on a bedside stool,
trying to keep her clean. She retches. He wipes her mouth.
Her hand, clumsy, tries to push his away but as she touches
his cool skin, it seems to help. Farah hesitates, touches
her forehead, knobby black fingers stroking her brow at the
hairline. She sighs, drifts away.

INT/DOCTOR'S OFFICE-DAY

Primitive equipment. The DOCTOR is 40-50, a hulk of a man,
Irish. She'll get into her clothes as he gets a bottle,
glasses, pours them a drink, sits, holds his glass to the
light.

DOCTOR

You've got syphilis.

Moment, stunned, then she continues dressing.

DOCTOR (cont'd)

Bror?

KAREN

There's no other.

(stops again)

What does one do about that?

DOCTOR

(shrugs)

Let it go. The cure's fine
punishment: he'll hope to die.

Divorce, if you feel that strongly.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

51/

DOCTOR (cont'd)
He's not ill?

KAREN
Not the last I saw him. But
that's three months--he's on
the border with Delamere.

DOCTOR
People are different: he may
have just a dose. You've got
a case like a trooper's.

KAREN
(beat)
It's not what I thought would
happen to me now.

DOCTOR
You'd best go home to deal with
it. They've got a thing called
Salvarsan.

KAREN
Arsenic.
(sips her drink)
No sex until a cure's established.
No children. Assuming I live.
Anything else?

DOCTOR
I'll have to see Brer.

KAREN
I'll send for him.

DOCTOR
You've had this before?

KAREN
No. My father got it with the
Indians. In North America.
(knocks back her drink)
When it seemed he'd go mad, he
killed himself. I didn't know
it was an act of courage: I
thought he musn't love me. I miss
him still. Very much, right now.

She gathers her things, moves to the door.

KAREN (cont'd)
What would you do? In my shoes?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

52/

DOCTOR

A man infected by his wife?!
Don't know I've heard of that.

(beat)

There'd be two dead anyway.

The double standard apparent.

EXT/HOSPITAL GARDEN-DAY

She walks with Kamante, who limps on his bandaged leg. All of his speeches, now and forever, begin with a grave pause.

KAREN

I am sick now, like your leg.
But I must go to a different
hospital, in my own country.

KAMANTE

In how many days are you not
sick like this leg?

KAREN

I don't know. But you will be
well soon and then you must go
to the farm and find Farah, who
will give you work.

KAMANTE

I am like you now, memsaab: the
mother of God says prayers for me.

She glances at the hospital, irritated.

KAREN

You should make up your own
mind about that.

KAMANTE

Farah prays to Allah. I think he
will not pay wages to a Christian.

KAREN

He will do as I say, and so will
you.

KAMANTE

Now I am like you--I think you
can give me a rupee.

KAREN

Why should I pay you to be like me?

KAMANTE

If I pray to Allah, I think Farah
can give me a goat.

Karen's bundled up for warmth, can move to stoke the fire; she sips champagne, sometimes seems to want to retch from nausea. She's tart but calm, less angry than she might be. It helps that Bror's in real anguish at what he's done.

KAREN

You've got no symptoms?

(he shakes his head)

Well, you've got a touch, anyway:
you'll have to be seen.

(beat)

The others, too.

(pained, he nods)

I hope they've got it.

BROR

You shouldn't feel that way.

KAREN

Don't moralize with me, my friend.

BROR

I only meant it's my fault, no
one else.

KAREN

God. You think so little of us
we're not even accessories.

(then)

I expect you to keep me out of
whatever you tell the ladies. I'm
going to lie, at home--say I've
got something tropical. I don't
want Mother upset.

BROR

I want to go with you.

KAREN

I'd like you to stay here, keep
an eye on things--can you do that?

BROR

It's little enough.

(then)

How long should it be?

She might die; they both know it.

KAREN

It shouldn't be long. A year?

He's miserable. She softens a bit, goes to touch his hair.

KAREN

A bit more than we bargained for,
isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

BROR

How will it be now, with us?

KAREN

(leaves him)

It's either shoot you or let it be: time may improve your odds.

(more serious)

I don't know. We'll have to wait for that.

(then)

We could have a crop before I'm back.

She stirs the fire. He's quiet here, and has some dignity.

BROR

It's too small to say I'm sorry, I'll let it go at that. There's much pain in front of you. May I ask you how you feel?

A moment. A strange smile.

KAREN

My turn's come round, hasn't it? For fighting on the ice.

His eyes fill, his face works, he has to leave the room. Her look after him is detached. She pokes the fire.

EXT/THE HOUSE-DAY

Karen's steamer trunk, luggage, being loaded into the mule wagon. More than the usual number of Kikiyu, including the cuckoo children, others we've seen before, all silent. Farah is stiff with Bror, as though he knows.

BROR

Where is the memsaab?

FARAH

She is riding now.

BROR

(to no one)

Bloody hell--she'll miss the train.

FARAH

(unsolicited)

She will come soon enough.

Bror reacts to Farah's tone, hostility between them.

On Karen, riding slowly, surrounded by game which drifts away as she passes. PULL AWAY AND AWAY until she's a small figure, alone on the plains she's come to love.

EXT/THE ABERDARES-DAY

Forest, not jungle, dense, with intermittent clearings. Just a glimpse of an elephant moving slowly, feeding.

Denys, intent, stalking, with a heavy double rifle. Now he looks back, quizzical.

Kanuthia, stock-still, with another rifle. He shakes a small pouch around his neck: a fine dust drifts behind him: they're downwind.

Denys looks left, motions.

Berkeley and his bearer watch Denys, move on his signal.

The elephant, feeding; his tusks are very fine.

Berkeley moves forward, suddenly freezes.

In front of him, a huge shiny patch of black hide in a glade.

Berkeley signals Denys: Stop!

Denys stops, can't see what Berkeley sees, is puzzled.

Berkeley puts his rifle to his forehead, imitating huge horns: Cape buffalo.

Denys looks around him.

There's a patch of hide, there! The glimpse of a heavy boss, there! A whole animal, browsing into a glade there! They've stumbled into a herd of feeding buffalo!

The elephant keeps moving.

Kanuthia has come to Denys; he shakes his pouch again. The dust hangs in the air: dead wind. Kanuthia and Denys look at each other, grin: it's getting dicey. Very careful so the shells don't clink, Denys pulls two huge cartridges from loops, holds them in the small fingers of his left hand, ready to shoot and reload very fast.

They edge backward, stop. Kanuthia shakes his pouch. The dust drifts forward: the wind has shifted and they're upwind! Denys snaps round to caution Berkeley.

Intent on the elephant, Berkeley is moving past a buffalo he knows is there. But he doesn't know the wind's changed. On his right quarter, a huge bull EXPLODES from a thicket, charges down on him! He FIRES! AGAIN!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

56/

The bull drops but the whole area is a sea of frantic buffalo, a ton apiece, CRASHING blindly through the forest.

Denys SHOOTS left at the cow coming for him, SHOOTS right at a young bull.

The cow veers, the bull drops.

Denys snaps the breech open: the cases eject; the shells in his fingers are already positioned, drop in. It took a second, no more.

Berkeley's running, switching rifles with his bearer as he goes, jumps up on the carcass of the first bull he dropped: he's still after the elephant.

It's moving fast, away.

Berkeley SHOOTS, slips, CURSING, falls off the dead bull.

A huge bull comes straight at him.

Berkeley struggles to free his rifle.

Denys SHOOTS! AGAIN! Riveted on Berkeley, he doesn't even turn as he takes the second rifle from Kanuthia.

It quiets down. The FADING NOISE of the buffalo running off. Four dead buffalo visible. No sign of Berkeley.

Quick and careful, Denys and Kanuthia move toward Berkeley's area. Here's his first bull and we can HEAR Berkeley swearing, giving orders in Swahili.

DENYS

Say Barclay.

BERKELEY (O.S.)

Land a hand here, will you?

More ORDERS in Swahili. Denys goes around the first bull. Berkeley's struggling, pinned waist-down between the first bull and the one Denys shot: it fell dead nearly in his lap. Berkeley and his gunbearer are pulling and shoving.

DENYS

I think you've one too many there, Barclay.

BERKELEY

(mild)

You might have done him a bit sooner.

Denys laughs. Now Berkeley does, too.

At the fire, one tent in the b.g. Kanuthia cleans a rifle. Denys in the camp chair, Berkeley on a stool, drink whisky, watch the fire. Denys peels an orange. In time:

BERKELEY

It was good to be with you today,
Denys.

DENYS

A good day all round.

A bond here, among men and land and animals, that no hearth--
and no woman--will defeat.

INT/EUROPEAN HOSPITAL WARD-NIGHT

Like an old sanatorium. The STIRRINGS and SMALL NOISES of sick people at night. A nurse walks away through the ward toward the hallway which backlights her, HEELS BRISK on the marble floor. FIND KAREN, in a fitful sleep, drooling. Her wrists are tied with gauze bandages to the bed frame; one hand grips a stanchion, tightens, relaxes.

INT/DRAWING ROOM-DAY

Bror struggles, exasperated, with the farm's books, glances outside to activity on the lawn, finally gets up to lean in the doorway, watching.

INT/EUROPEAN HOSPITAL DAY ROOM-DAY

Karen, drawn, sits in a wheelchair, writing a letter. She reaches, wipes her mouth, continues writing.

EXT/THE TERRACE-DAY

Bror, another man, and the SECOND MAN from Prince Wilhelm's party, with three young women, one of them Idina, another a pert blonde, 20, Petal. They're drinking, shooting skeet, using dinner plates as clay pigeons. Bror AD LIES stay ahead--
swing through instructions to Petal.

INT/KAREN'S BEDROOM-DAY

Farah carefully dusts around the things on Karen's vanity, arranges her combs and brushes. O.S., the SHOTGUNS.

EXT/STONY BEACH-DAY

A gray, flinty day. Karen, in a bulky sweater, pants, still pale, her eyes dark-circled, walks with her MOTHER, a somber woman all in black, solid, not elegant. Karen skips stones.

KAREN

Bror says my cook has died. Esa.
One of his wives gave him poison.

(CONTINUED)

HER MOTHER

Why did she do that?

KAREN

I don't know.

HER MOTHER

(several yards later)

Some people aren't meant to be married.

Karen has to laugh at that leap between cultures. Then:

HER MOTHER (cont'd)

I think it's time you gave it up.

KAREN

Why?!

HER MOTHER

It's too demanding; you're not that strong.

(beat)

Would Bror be difficult?

KAREN

(still stunned)

I don't know, mother.

HER MOTHER

Tell him he can have Katholm.

Ah. She means give up the farm, not the marriage.

KAREN

He wouldn't leave Africa now.

HER MOTHER

No. They just don't give a damn, as long as it's strange and wild. Even if they kill you.

(then)

There's a limit to what we can put in to this coffee of yours.

KAREN

(uneasy)

We'll get a crop soon . . . if you can wait a bit longer.

HER MOTHER

(moving on)

Elle plans to marry soon.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN
Who is he?

HER MOTHER
She hasn't told me yet.
(beat)
He's a solicitor. Ambitious, they
say. He wears jewelry. At least
they'll stay at home.
(beat)
Don't get sick again.

KAREN
All right.

HER MOTHER
And if you do, don't lie about it.

Her mother is formidable: Karen has always sought the love
she withholds. She's torn now, both intimidated and growing
angry. In time:

KAREN
I'll lie when I choose, mother.
In this case, I did it to spare
you.

They walk on in silence, then:

HER MOTHER
You seem to be growing up.

EXT/THE FARM-DAY-KAREN'S POV

Up the drive. A hundred Kikuyu fixed on the CAMERA, moving
to it, excited and happy, Juma among them. Left behind at
the house, Kamante, and apart from him, Farah, solitary.

OTHER ANGLES

Bror's driving the wagon. Karen descends into a clutch of
the old Kikuyu women, toothless and bald, who cluck over
her, pinch her arms.

She moves toward the house, has sweets for the children,
comes to Kamante, who's thought long and hard about this
moment of drama. He has put on his old bandages; now, with
great affect, he slowly unwraps them to reveal his leg,
scarred but well. Karen is appropriately grave but her eyes
are merry.

KAREN
You are well enough to work then.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

60/

KAMANTE

I am cooking now for Esa. He is not
bap-ti-sad so now he is dead.

KAREN

Are you paid wages for this cooking?

KAMANTE

Not so much as Esa.

She moves on, notices the cuckoo clock-child, hands cupped,
stock-still, jostled in the pack. When she stops before him,
he becomes the center of things. He opens his hands: it's
a baby owl. He thrusts it to her; she takes it, strokes it,
then, affording him much dignity, SAYS a formal "Asante."
He runs away.

She comes onto the terrace, to Farah, looks up at him, looks
down at the bird, strokes it, then looks up again.

KAREN

Are you well, Farah Aden?

FARAH

I am well enough, msabu.

KAREN

Then I am well enough also.

She enters the house, Farah following, and is home.

INT/DRAWING ROOM-NIGHT

She's poring over the books, turning pages back and forth,
trying to make sense of it, her wine ignored. Bror wanders,
drinks, waits for her.

KAREN

(sighs)

Well, I'm glad to see you but
you're no friend to my money.

BROR

I know. It seems to just go,
doesn't it? We ought to be thinking
about a motorcar, too.

KAREN

We ought to be thinking about
a crop.

(leaves it)

Tell me more news--what about
Barclay Cole?

(CONTINUED)

BROR

He was ill, but I think he's well again.

KAREN

What about Finch-Hatton?

BROR

Egypt, I think--the army's teaching him to fly. Does he interest you?

KAREN

Would that worry you?

BROR

You're entitled to do as you like, I suppose.

KAREN

My life is rich with men who leave me--I shan't be interested in him.

BROR

The other ladies are.

KAREN

They'll never hold him. Is there money there?

BROR

I don't know. He's got a farm, near Eldoret. Invests in most everything--did ivory for a while. His father's an earl, I think, but there's an older brother.

KAREN

What a strange lot we are--out here on the edge of things.

BROR

I'm glad you're back, out here on the edge of things.

(kisses her)

I'd like to sleep with you tonight.

KAREN

(beat)

I want to think about that--is that all right?

(CONTINUED)

BROR

Of course.

He starts to leave, grins to himself, then openly to her.

BROR (cont'd)

Von Otter's going into Uganda to look at the elephant--they're supposed to be fantastic. Would you mind?

KAREN

(smiles)

No. I'd like some time myself, actually.

(he nods. as he goes:)

Bror?

(when he turns)

This bad thing--I'm very fond of you.

BROR

(serious)

I believe you are.

He leaves. She wanders to her desk, looks at the books, becomes engrossed, sits to go to work.

RAIN-A SERIES OF SHOTS

--First drops, on the surface of the cistern.

--Wet lambs, huddled in a pen.

--Drenched chickens among the manyattas, and now Kamanta, catching one for the table.

--Karen and Belknap in a roofed open shed which shelters coffee sorting equipment, inspecting it.

--Close on a blooming coffee blossom, white against green.

--A whole tree in bloom, dripping wet.

--Wide on the coffee fields, a rolling sea of white, rich with promise.

EXT/THE COFFEE SHED-DAY

A long line of Kikiyu bring baskets of red coffee berries, dump them, adding to a huge pile. As they pass, a black foreman drops a coin into their empty baskets.

EXT/THE DRYING TABLES-DAY

The husked beans spread on long tables in the sun to dry. Kikiyu smooth them, bring the bottom beans to the top; it's fluid, satisfying work, hot. Karen works with them; they are much taken with that.

EXT/AT THE SHED-DAY

63/

A last wagon, loaded with huge burlap sacks, prepares to leave, drivers making ready.

Karen's with Belknap; he has a grimy ledger under his arm.

KAREN

There's peace--where's the prosperity?! Why should coffee fall now! Just because we're not killing anyone?!

BELKNAP

Tea's down just as bad.

(beat)

We could fertilize next year.

The wagon moves out, the drivers' whips CRACKING.

KAREN

We ought to get a profit growing eighty tons of anything.

(beat)

Our debt's too high.

(irritated)

Do they always have to whip them so?!

INT/MUTEAIGA CLUB-NIGHT

Decorated, in a fashion, for New Year's Eve, jammed with drinking settlers in evening clothes; some dance to gramophone records. A bar, overrun, but a number carry their own bottles. Everyone's there. Denys talks with a striking teenager, so clean-cut we're not put off she smokes a thin cigar. Berkeley dances with Karen, holds a glass. A sense that she's protecting her pride revealing her knowledge of Eror's philandering, though it makes Berkeley uncomfortable. Above the din:

KAREN

Great white hunter? Eror's made for the role.

BERKELEY

What's he think of the clients?

KAREN

Rich Americans. With girlfriends-- he's mad for them. Booked straight through, except the rains. I hardly see him.

BERKELEY

We'll all be hired guns soon enough--I ought to chat with him. He's here, isn't he?

(CONTINUED)

KAREN

Somewhere. Go gently--you
may be interrupting.

BERKELEY

(beat, then, blurting)
Why don't you come out with me
some time?

KAREN

(beat, gentle)
That would change things,
Barclay.

It's midnight: CHEERS, kissing, AULD LANG SYNE. Tender, she
kisses him; he blushes. Now another woman pulls him away;
he gives Karen his glass as he's tugged off.

The teenager is kissing Denys for all she's worth. Nicely,
he ends it, kisses her once more--on the forehead--moves
across the crowded room toward Karen.

She sees him coming, turns away to lose herself in the mob.
She's squeezing through when:

Denys is in front of her. He takes her glass, DROPS IT, kisses
her: she doesn't respond. The other kissing's over so the
group around them notices, AD LIAS jibes at Denys.

DENYS

I've embarrassed you. I'm sorry.

So she kisses him, a magnificent kiss, her body bold. She
means only to defy their audience--small CHEERS, some women
watch shrewdly--but when they break, both are somber. They
move off. When they're more alone, she turns on him.

KAREN

Why?!

DENYS

You're a lovely woman. You've
got a fine mouth.

KAREN

I like your mouth, too, shall we
marry now?!

(turns away)

You people. No thought. No
consequences. No . . . later.

(turns back)

My life's all right. I don't
want it complicated.

DENYS

You'll have an ordinary life then.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

65/

A hefty dowager, stiff with pearls and presence, the sort who might rule India, fumbles in her purse for her revolver, FIRES TWICE into the ceiling. A HUSH. In a quavering voice, she begins God Save the King. One by one, all JOIN IN. PAN AROUND: they are flawed, idiosyncratic, some are dissolute, but they love their country and are far from home.

EXT/MUTHAIGA CLUB-NIGHT-WIDE

O.S., the ANTHEM. A few natives with horses, a number of cars. Eror and Petal MOVE THROUGH SHOT, running off.

AT AN OPEN CAR

Secluded. Eror gets into the rear seat, seems to open his pants: he's shielded by Petal, who's stopped to fumble beneath her long dress; we think she's removed her panties.

She sits astride him, drops her straps, cups a breast, puts it to his mouth.

INT/THE MOVING CAR-NIGHT

Karen's driving. INTERCUT for the animals appearing in the headlights. In time:

KAREN

Someone's left her underwear in back.

(moment; she sighs)

I'd like you to take a place in town. You'll have to do it yourself--the farm's got all my money.

(no response)

You're welcome to visit, but I can't deal with this anymore. I'd rather people think we're separated.

EROR

Do you want a divorce?

KAREN

No. Do you?

EROR

No reason--there's no one else I care about.

KAREN

Then why are they so important?

ON KAREN, crying, brushing angrily at her eyes.

A number of polo trophies. The BANKER is 50, has a leather-covered stump where his left hand should be. He's giving Karen documents.

BANKER

Here, you're giving us a lien against your crop; we'd take it over should you default.

KAREN

I'd default only if the crop failed. In which case . . . there'd be no crop.

BANKER

(unbothered by logic)

Yes. We'll also need Baron Blixen's signature.

KAREN

It's my property.

BANKER

Yes. But then--it's our money: we'd like the Baron to sign as well.

Omnipotent, he can afford to be bland. Karen's disgusted.

INT/LADY MACMILLAN'S DRAWING ROOM-DAY

Karen, LADY MACMILLAN, very distinguished and shrewd, two other women play mah-jong. Karen's bored. One WOMAN gushes.

WOMAN

He's always been a doubter, Doctor Detweiler. Agnostic at least, worse I think. A man of science and all? Well. We took him up Mount Kenya. Spectacular day. The weather kept changing, rain and then snow and then the sun shone and the animals were all about. And when we came down, Doctor Detweiler said--it was hard for him, I think--he said there on Mount Kenya, he found it possible to believe in the existence of God.

Triumphant, she pauses for reaction.

KAREN

I wonder--on Mount Kenya--if God finds it possible to believe in the existence of Doctor Detweiler.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

677

Lady Macmillan has a glint in her eye.

LADY MACMILLAN

Do you need more lemon, Karen?
Or do you have enough?

INT/HER BEDROOM-DAY

Karen's at her dressing table, idly brushing her hair, ignoring the baby owl--a bit bigger now--who walks among her things, challenges his reflection in the mirror. Now she studies her image, scientific, makes no judgment at all.

She picks up the owl, strokes it.

KAREN

Is that a prince in there?

She kisses the owl's beak. It remains an owl. She's not surprised.

EXT/IN THE FOREST-DAY

Karen's riding home, a gutted Tommy across her pommel. Ismail walks beside her with her rifle. Now, faint, the SOUND of a Mozart symphony (O.S.). She strains to hear.

EXT/THE TERRACE-DAY

Denys's safari truck, with Kanuthia, Bilea. He's on the terrace with champagne, gramophone BLARING. Ismail takes the Tommy. Separated from Bror, she's wary, suspicious.

DENYS

I thought you'd want some music.

KAREN

You're very thoughtful, aren't you?

DENYS

(reduces the volume)

This one's yours; I got another for myself.

KAREN

(pouring for herself)

Where's Barclay?

DENYS

He's down with something.

KAREN

Bror's moved to town, did you know?

(CONTINUED)

DENYS

That's a private matter, I'd think.

KAREN

(beat, even)

Did you think you'd spend the night?

DENYS

Can't, thanks.

(beat)

I'm going down along the Tana.

KAREN

No.

DENYS

Some fine lion there. I'd like you to come.

KAREN

No.

DENYS

(beat)

Life's not years, Tania. It's just a day here and a minute there--a few fine moments. You've got to collect them.

She wanders, weary with her own conflicts.

KAREN

I won't sleep with you.

DENYS

You'll do as you wish.

When she decides, it's as though she's been defeated.

KAREN

When did you want to go?

DENYS

Now's all right.

KAREN

(beat)

I'll get some things.

She goes. Denys takes the needle from the record. No victory here, for either of them. Almost a sadness.

EXT/ON THE PLAIN-DAY-WIDE

The safari truck, jouncing along a two-track.

INT/THE TRUCK

69/

Denys is calm. Karen's stiff, pinched, certain now she shouldn't have come.

EXT/FIRST CAMP-NIGHT

They're in camp chairs at the fire. In the b.g., two small tents, each dim-lit by its own kerosene lantern. Denys has an orange; she smokes, drawn up, protective.

DENYS

--Ndrobo are fine in the bush, the best with elephant. Turkana--like Kanuthia--horrible fierce. But Masai? Nothing like 'em anywhere. If Rome had come this far? . . . now there'd have been a battle. The magistrates don't know what to do with them--they die in prison. Oughten't kill them for stealing a cow so they just fine them, nothing else to do.

(beat)

You've seen them, you said.

KAREN

Yes.

DENYS

(beat)

We've got an early day. Why don't you pack it in?

At once, she goes straight to her tent, drops her cigarette in the fire on the way. Denys fishes in his bush jacket for a small book, reads, eats his orange. The NIGHT SOUNDS of Africa. Her movements cast vague shadows on the tent wall. Engrossed, Denys ignores both sounds and shadows.

EXT/ON THE PLAIN-DAY-WIDE

The safari truck, moving at dawn.

INT/THE TRUCK-DAY-LATER

Karen's more interested in the world around her, grins, points:

ON THE PLAIN

Warthogs, trotting single file, brisk burghers on business.

EXT/WITH THE TRUCK-DAY

Broken down, bonnet open. Denys, clean as a surgeon, makes fine adjustments to the engine with a screwdriver. Karen, sweat-soaked and greasy, is in charge of the crank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

70/

He SAYS again. She cranks. He adjusts. AGAIN. She cranks. He adjusts. AGAIN. She cranks. The ENGINE COMES ALIVE. He closes the bonnet, pleased, oblivious to her, dirty, dripping, breathing hard. But not unhappy: no concessions are being made for her gender.

EXT/SECOND CAMP-NIGHT

She's standing at the fire in a dressing gown, brushing the burrs from her hair, unaware that Denys is nodding off, his book in his lap.

KAREN

Did you know I'd had syphilis?

He comes awake, knows the moment is delicate.

DENYS

I never seem to get anything.
German measles, once.

(beat)

I'd best find a pillow--bloody
lorry wore me out. Good night,
Tania.

KAREN

Good night, Finch-Hatton.

She watches him to his tent, combs, thoughtful.

EXT/ON THE PLAIN-DAY

Denys, Kanuthia crouch in the clump of bush they're using as a blind, intent. Karen sits behind them, poking and tracing in the ground with a stick, her mind elsewhere: it's been a long stalk. The men stiffen, stare into the high grass.

A leopard's there, moving toward them, very careful.

Slow, muffling it with his hand, Denys snicks off his safety.

The leopard comes ahead, wary.

Slow, Denys brings up his rifle; two seconds more and he'll stand and shoot.

KAREN

(defiant)

I won't be passed around.

The leopard's gone in a flash.

Denys lowers his rifle. She knows she's done a bad thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

71/

DENYS

It shouldn't be a problem:
not many would have you.

A look between them. Now she starts to grin, and he does,
and they both laugh. Even Kanuthia's a bit amused.

EXT/RIVER CAMP-DAY

Along the Tana, green, idyllic. A white cloth on the camp
table where they've finished lunch. Wine in a tin bucket
of water, no ice. A lazy day. Denys fusses with a rifle;
Karen's trying to desnag her hair, wincing, MUTTERING.

DENYS

I can fix that, I think.

EXT/CLOSER TO THE RIVER-LATER

Karen's on a camp stool in shorts and camisole, a towel round
her shoulders, hair thick with soap. Denys, in shorts, no
shirt, stands in front of her, suds to the elbows, having
a fine time, reciting all the while, with gestures now and
then. It's very intimate.

DENYS

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship/
The boat spun round and round.
And all was still, save that the hill/
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips--the Pilot shrieked/
And fell down in a fit.
The holy Hermit raised his eyes/
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars; the Pilot's boy/
Who now doth crazy go/
Laughed loud and long, and all the while/
His eyes went to and fro.
Ha, ha, quoth he, full plain I see/
The Devil knows how to row.

Farewell, farewell--

KAREN

You're skipping verses.

DENYS

I leave out the dull parts.

Farewell, farewell, but this I tell/
To thee, thou Wedding Guest:
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

72/

Pouring slowly, he rinses her hair with a bucket of water. Her shoulders, camisole, his shorts, get wet. When she opens her eyes, he's looking at her, grave. She's grave, too.

LATER

Karen reclines in a camp chair, eyes closed, face tilted to the sun, while Denys, sitting behind her, combs her hair. She's drifting, feeling luxuriant, then, casual:

DENYS

Do you want a lion?

Her eyes open. A long moment.

KAREN

Yes.

DENYS

(beat)

We'll go early. Try to find one on a kill.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

Dawn. Karen checks her rifle yet again, very somber.

DENYS (V.O.)

You want a heart shot, if you can. Just behind the shoulder. I've got a four-fifty you can use; don't worry about the recoil: you won't feel a thing, till later.

Karen, Denys, Kanuthia, walking through thigh-high grass.

DENYS (V.O.)

They're quick. Very, very quick. I'll be just behind you. If there's a charge, drop flat--right now--and let me have him.

The three hunkered down, staring, fixed on the same spot.

DENYS (V.O.)

They'll twitch, twice, usually, just before they come.

Several lions, including a big male, feeding on a zebra.

DENYS (V.O.)

Then a snarl. Ugly sound. That's to freeze you, just for a second. With most of what they're after, that's all they'll need.

EXT/ON THE PLAIN-DAY

They move slowly toward the lions, about sixty yards away.
The lions keep feeding.

Denys whispers instructions, points. They go forward, Karen first, Denys a few yards behind on her right, Kanuthia behind Denys on his right.

Karen's intent, checks her safety again and again. Like the prospect of being hanged, lions concentrate the mind.

The big male sees them, stops feeding.

Karen looks back to Denys. He nods. It's about forty yards. She's raising her rifle when, O.S., a SNARL, a very ugly sound.

FLASH CUT

Karen, quizzical, half-turning to Denys.

SLOW MOTION

On her left, a huge male explodes from the grass, charges home. We SEE two bounds.

SLOW MOTION

Denys turns, brings up his rifle. Karen's squarely in his line of fire.

VERY SLOW MOTION

Karen turns, smooth, the rifle easing into her shoulder: we SEE it kick once, a moment, kick again. And only now, the CRACK of her rifle. And AGAIN.

SLOW MOTION

Karen's lion stumbles, tumbles head over heels into the grass.

SLOW MOTION

The big male on the zebra charges, great leaps.

SLOW MOTION

Denys pivots, FIRES once, the NOISE delayed.

SLOW MOTION

Denys's lion whirls, snaps at his flank, flops down.

SLOW MOTION

Cordite smoke drifts in the air. Karen looks to Denys. Pure terror. Denys is intent.

SUDDENLY, REAL TIME

74/

DENYS

(urgent)

Load! Now!

Frantic, Karen fumbles with her rifle, reloads. Denys watches both lions, back and forth. The other lions withdraw.

Now Kanuthia moves forward, throwing stones at Karen's lion. In time, he stands near it. It's dead.

Denys walks carefully to his lion, dead, too.

Karen hasn't moved. Her rifle's at her waist. Denys comes to her. She is standing tall, refusing to collapse, but her lip trembles; she bites it to keep from crying.

DENYS

(low)

I'll say it just the once. We'll hunt again. It's essential that I know what you'll do. You-must-do-as-I-say.

Her shoulders shake, tears course her cheeks, her lip is bloody, but she won't give in. She makes no sound, nods.

DENYS (cont'd)

Go to your lion now.

NEW ANGLE

She walks around her lion, brushes at her tears. Kanuthia takes her rifle, clicks the safety on.

LATER

She sits cross-legged, studies her lion's massive head, touches an eyetooth, feels its point. She examines a forepaw--she needs both hands for this--feels the claws, the dewclaw, puts the paw to her face, rubs her cheek against it, bleeds from a single long scratch.

Denys and Kanuthia come, bloody from skinning the other lion.

DENYS

We'll take his hide now.

KAREN

(standing)

I want to do it.

(he hands her the knife)

You'll have to tell me how.

DENYS

Start along his hind leg.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

75/

She goes to the lion, starts to cut.

DENYS (cont'd) (O.S.)
I'm sorry for the time I didn't
know you--but life's made you
very fine.

She looks at him, nods, resumes the skinning.

EXT/RIVER CAMP-NIGHT-HIGH ANGLE-WIDE

At distance. The tents, the truck, the fire, several pools
of kerosene light. The dining table a dab of white, deserted.
Eyes--red, green, amber--glow and vanish at the edge of the
light. It's surreal, Rousseau come alive.

INT/THE TENT-NIGHT-CLOSE ON THEM

Lantern-lit, kissing, hungry. They break. Moment.

DENYS
Turn up the light, will you?

She does, unbuttons her cuffs.

KAREN
Have you won now, Denys?

DENYS
(dry, but gentle)
Not yet, I hope. Are you sure
you're going to lose?

KAREN
Tell me what this means?

DENYS
What would you like it to mean,
Tania? This great sacrifice of
yours. Does it mean you've gone
all weak in the knees and I'm
to have my brutish way?
(she glares)
Perhaps it means we've nothing
more to read.
(she has to grin)

KAREN
It could mean I've killed a lion.

DENYS
(beat)
It might mean you're lovely,
and I want you. And hope you
want me, too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

75A/

Moment. She nods, begins to unbutton her shirt front.

DENYS

I'd like to do that.

He unbuttons two buttons, stops.

DENYS (cont'd)

It means we're here. Just that.

He waits for her consent. She nods. He continues.

MOVING SHOT

To circle the tent, sometimes ON THE TENT WALL and their sharp silhouettes, sometimes THROUGH MOSQUITO NETTING at each end of the tent, their figures visible, gauzy.

He takes off her shirt. She holds her arms over her head; he removes her camisole. He touches her breast, unbuttons her shorts; they slide to her feet. He slips her panties down her legs; she kicks them away.

He kisses her shoulder, neck, throat.

KAREN

(very low)

Jesus . . Jesus . .

INT/DRAWING ROOM-DAY

Karen's staring, not happy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

76/

BROR (O.S.)
Just a few pounds--fifty, if
you can.

KAREN
I'm broke, too, you know.

NEW ANGLE

But she goes to her desk, finds her check ledger.

BROR
I've clients in, end of the month
--I'll pay you then. Wouldn't ask
but tips were a bit light this
time--couldn't find them a leopard.

KAREN
Tips?! You're living on tips?

BROR
And salary. Tip's a hundred quid
if they've shot the whole card--
it's not the poor I'm taking round.
(takes the check)
You're well?

KAREN
If we get a decent crop.

BROR
You look well. The air?

KAREN
(warning)
Take care, my friend. Remember
the hand that feeds.

BROR
(considers that,
then, meaningful)
I suppose that's only fair,
isn't it? . . . Like turnabout.

HOLD ON KAREN

INT/THE KITCHEN-DAY

Kamante is dicing something, paying little mind to Karen.

KAREN
Your clear soup. The new lettuce.
And chicken, just the breasts. In
a sauce.

(no response)
I trust this has your approval?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

77/

KAMANTE
(the usual pause)
Who is coming, memsaab?

KAREN
Swana Cole is coming.

KAMANTE
I will think on Swana Cole.

She goes off, exasperated. Kamante dices on.

INT/AT DINNER-NIGHT

GRAMOPHONE MUSIC, low. They're in evening clothes. Berkeley's flushed. Juma clears the soup plates.

KAREN
(not unhappy)
I'm in the worst sort of trouble
now.

BERKELEY
Finch-Hatton?
(she nods)
Will you divorce?

KAREN
Then I'd have no one at all.
He's thinking: only me.

BERKELEY
What about Denys then?

KAREN
To marry? Keep at home? The
woman who'd do that should be
shot.

(beat)
I'm not enough anyway.

BERKELEY
You'll be alone a good bit, I'd
think.

Juma serves the main course.

KAREN
That's not new. It's not knowing
. . . how far to go--I'm not good
that way.

(looks at her plate)
Kamante!!

(to Berkeley)
He's out of hand entirely.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

72/

KAREN (cont'd)
(when Kamante comes)
Does this look like chicken?!

He comes beside her, gravely inspects her plate.

KAMANTE
Here is not a chicken, memsaab.
Here is a fish.

KAREN
Go away.

He does. Amused but careful, Berkeley takes a bite.

BERKELEY
Quite good, isn't it?
(they have to laugh)

EXT/ON THE TERRACE-NIGHT

They're dancing to a WALTZ (O.S.).

KAREN
So how do you think I'll take
to adultery?

BERKELEY
I'd hardly call it that.

KAREN
Not if you want to come again.
(then)
You're warm, Barclay.

BERKELEY
You'd best watch out then.
(long beat)
We're all misfits, you know--
they'd lock us up back home.

They dance on. Against the music, the SOUND (V.O.) of metal
rattling against metal.

INT/EXT-DENYS'S LORRY-DAY

Jouncing along the track to Karen's house. The Kikuyu along
the way salute open-palmed; Denys responds automatically.
Kamuthia rides with Denys; Bilea sways in back.

DENYS'S POV

As he turns up the drive to the house. Karen's cutting flowers
in the garden beyond, looks TO CAMERA.

As Denys parks the lorry, Karen has begun to stroll across the lawn, flowers bunched in one hand. She walks slowly, as though she wants every detail of the moment. But she doesn't pause when she reaches him, goes straight into his arms. They hug, don't kiss, turn to the house.

INT/HER BEDROOM-DAY

He's full-length facedown on her bed, naked, head and arms hanging over the foot. She's cross-legged, scraping at his legs with a knife, digging out ticks and chiggers. Now and then, she looks at his body, then:

KAREN

You've got a nice body, I think.

DENYS

You, too, Baroness.

KAREN

You ought to look in on Barclay
--he seems a bit down.

DENYS

He's been cooped up.

(beat)

I'm thinking I'll sell the house--no sense keeping it when I'm out all the time with the visiting guns. How would it be if I kept some of my things with you?

KAREN

(long beat)

You'd come and go from here then.

DENYS

I thought so, yes.

KAREN

(beat)

All right.

(reaches for a cigarette)

DENYS

You're not enthused.

KAREN

(crisp)

When the gods want to punish you, they answer your prayers.

She lights her cigarette, holds it to a stubborn tick embedded in his calf.

A grassy slope overlooking the plain, recalling the shot under titles. They've picnicked; he lies dozing, eyes closed throughout. Their horses browse nearby.

KAREN

Finch-Hatton?

DENYS

Um.

KAREN

If I get eaten up sometime,
bury me here, will you?

DENYS

All right.

KAREN

There. Where it drops away.

DENYS

What do you want on the stone?

KAREN

(beat)

This be the verse you grave for me/
Here she lies, where she long'd to be.

BOTH, in unison

Home is the sailor, home from the sea/
And the hunter, home from the hill.

DENYS

Too vulgar.

KAREN

(beat)

She loved but once, then well.

DENYS

Presumes a bit.

KAREN

(beat)

I had an aunt of whom they said:
Her days were hard, her nights not.

DENYS

Better. We'll work on it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

80A/

KAREN

(beat)

If you were dead, no one else
would ever have you.

(beat)

That's horrid.

(no response)

Well?

DENYS

Too horrid.

KAREN

Tell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

81/

DENYS

If I were dead, no one else
could ever have me.

(she hits him)

Shall we eat at the club tonight?

KAREN

Together?

Denys laughs as though that's the funniest thing ever. He
pulls her on top of him; they begin to make love.

INT/MUTEAIGA CLUB DINING ROOM-NIGHT

They're eating. She's stiff, defiant (though no one pays
them attention) but her apprehension shows. He notices. Then:

DENYS

Do you remember the feeling, when
the lion came for you, out of
the grass?

KAREN

Yes.

DENYS

(truly puzzled)

Then how can you think any of
this is . . . relevant?

Moment; she nods. Delamere leaves the men's bar (from which
there's NOISE (O.S.)), passes by their table.

DELAMERE

Denys. Hello, Karen.

DENYS

Hello, D.

KAREN

It's very gay in the inner
sanctum tonight.

DELAMERE

The Americans are teaching us
about poker. Blix is down a few
hundred but we're otherwise all
right.

(he moves on)

KAREN

(beat)

"Blix" hasn't got a few hundred.

(beat)

Go and get him, will you?

(CONTINUED)

DENYS

(beat)

No.

KAREN

(low)

He doesn't have it! I haven't
got it, either!

DENYS

It's not my affair, Tania.

KAREN

He's your friend, isn't he?

DENYS

If he were, all the more reason.

KAREN

You could do it for me.

DENYS

(beat; nods)

Yes.

But won't. She looks at him, goes grimly to the men's bar.

INT/MEN'S BAR-NIGHT

Shabby. Military plaques, artillery shells, trophy heads.
A number of men, some playing poker. Eror's back's to the
door. A stunned silence as she comes to him.

EROR

(turning)

What is it, Tanne?

KAREN

May I see you, please?

The Huge Man from the wedding reception sits alone, puts
down his newspaper. Eror moves away with Karen, both low:

EROR

You've got no business here.

KAREN

Are you winning?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

93/

HUGE MAN

Von Blixen! Get that woman out
of here!

Firm, Bror propells her toward the door. She resists.

KAREN

(low)

We haven't got the money!

BROR

You've got your pound of flesh,
let me be.

She pulls free, stares at him, baffled.

BROR (cont'd)

You're here with your lover,
isn't that enough?

She slaps him. He just looks at her.

The whole room's embarrassed. Some look away, others gape.

BROR (cont'd)

(quiet)

I'd think that evens us out,
wouldn't you say?

She turns on her heel, leaves. Bror rejoins the table, SAYS
a brisk sorry. The game, forced CONVERSATION, resume. The
Huge Man returns to his newspaper.

INT/BERKELEY'S HOUSE-DAY

Dark, like adobe, Arabic. Berkeley looks like death, fixes
Denys a drink. On a floor pillow with sewing, a lovely Somali
(Mariammo) watches; she has a dignity all her own.

DENYS

You do look like hell.

BERKELEY

I s'pose I do. How's Karen?

DENYS

Well enough. Still going broke.

BERKELEY

Well, we're all that. How have
the clients been?

(CONTINUED)

DENYS

Not awful. The women seem to go a bit mad--born assassins, I think. But the men have been decent enough. When do we get you out of here?

BERKELEY

(beat)

My water's gone black, Denys.

Denys looks at him steadily, drinks.

DENYS

George Martin had blackwater-- when was it? Five years now?

BERKELEY

Um. Strong fellow, George.

DENYS

Is there anything I can do for you while you're down?

BERKELEY

No.

(beat)

You might take along that ten-bore you're so fond of--ask them to look at the bluing?

(Denys nods)

And the Rigby. Trigger seems mushy but perhaps it's just me. Ask Karen to try it. Nice size gun for her.

DENYS

All right . . . Mariammo?

BERKELEY

She'll have some money. She'll want her own people, I think.

DENYS

You don't think you ought to go home for a while?

BERKELEY

Oh . . .

(a crooked grin)

I am home, I s'pose.

INT/DRAWING ROOM-DAY

Empty. We NOTICE it's full of Denys's books now. O.S., the SOUND of the front door and Karen's entrance.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN (O.S.)
(calling)
Denys?

DENYS (O.S.)
Out here.

She's in the drawing room now, makes herself a whisky.

KAREN
How's Barclay?

DENYS (O.S.)
(beat)
All right.

EXT/ON THE TERRACE

Denys sits with his empty glass, looking out on the late afternoon. She joins him, kisses him.

KAREN
We're about ready to pick, I think.

DENYS
He's given you his Rigby.

And so she knows. She sits, looks up at the hills. In time:

KAREN
How long will it be?

DENYS
Blackwater fever.

KAREN
I'll go to him tomorrow then.

DENYS
No. He looks quite awful; he
wouldn't want you there.

KAREN
(stares, then)
Balls.

She moves to the drawing room. At the door:

KAREN (cont'd)
What the hell do you think a
woman's for?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

86/

She goes in, returns with whisky, fills half his glass.

DENYS

(quiet)

There's a woman there, Tania.
He's been with her some years now.

(beat)

She's Somali.

(beat)

The comfort you'd bring is less
than his pain if you knew. You
musn't go.

KAREN

(slow)

I'm not to see my dying friend,
because he's with a Negress.

(no response)

Is he right, to think that of me?
That I care who's at a deathbed?

DENYS

(impatient)

Not that. That he's been with
her . . . over time.

The sun slants low across the lawn. The native children play,
gather in the goats.

KAREN

Did he love her?

DENYS

(irritated)

I don't know.

(beat)

I think so.

Denys is having trouble with his own thoughts. In time:

KAREN

I want to think I'd've got round
it somehow . . . that I'd have
made it not matter . . .

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

87/

DENYS
(anguished)
It did to me.

Moment. She comes to stand behind his chair. In time:

KAREN
They must have been very lonely.

EXT/A SMALL CEMETERY-DAY

Set off by a token iron fence, neat enough. The coffin's in the ground, 30-40 settlers at the grave with an Anglican minister, SAYING a last prayer. Most heads are bowed, not Karen's: she's looking to the fence where a number of Africans watch, among them Mariammo, barefoot in fine Somali clothes and gold jewelry, proud witness to a ceremony at which she is unwelcome.

OUTSIDE THE FENCE-LATER

The Europeans disperse, go to their cars and carriages, MURMURING. As Karen passes Mariammo, she pauses just a moment, inclines her head respectfully. Mariammo is very proud, just looks at her. Karen moves on.

As she reaches her car, Lady Delamere stops to speak.

LADY DELAMERE
Where is Denys, Karen?

KAREN
I don't know, he was gone this morning.
(beat)
I think he's off with Barclay..

Lady Delamere almost understands, nods. Karen gets into her car.

EXT/THE FOREST-DAY

Kanuthia, alone, squats on his heels with a rifle, watches something, not involved. There will be no killing today.

A heavy-tusked bull elephant, trunk in the wind, ears spread, sways, deciding whether to charge.

Denys is thirty yards in front of him, his rifle casual in one hand, upside down on his shoulder.

The elephant shuffles, edgy, ready to come.

Denys brings his rifle in front of him but not to his shoulder, FIRES both barrels into the air.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

88/

The elephant crashes off into the forest.

Kanuthia watches, doesn't move.

EXT/THE COFFEE FIELDS-DAY-A SERIES OF SHOTS

Of Kikuyu children picking coffee. [It might be interesting if they were aware of the camera.]

EXT/THE COFFEE SHED-DAY

The coffee pickers (adults) dump their baskets, are paid. The great pile of berries seems impressive, but CAMERA FINDS Karen, Belknap by the counting station, expressions bleak.

INT/HER BEDROOM-DAY

CLOSE ON the fully-grown owl, unblinking on her vanity.

NEW ANGLE

Karen, fully-dressed in farm clothes on the covered bed, drawn up, eyes red from crying. Now, O.S. and BUILDING, the SOUND OF AN AIRPLANE. It's quite loud before she notices, gets up to go outside.

EXT/ON THE TERRACE-DAY

The plane, a Gypsy Moth, banks to come low again over the farmhouse.

Karen watches, serious.

The plane dives very low. It's Denys at the controls. He gestures, points off: a place for her to meet him.

Karen watches. Now she breaks into a great grin, runs into the house.

EXT/A MEADOW NEARBY-MINUTES LATER

Mounted, Karen races along the edge of the meadow. The plane comes THROUGH SHOT, landing, passing her.

AT THE PLANE

As Denys pivots it around, GUNS the engine. Karen's off her horse, SHOUTS, incredulous:

KAREN

Where did you get it?!

DENYS

Mombasa! Come along! There's elephant on the hill!

As she's struggling into the cockpit in front of him. They have to shout.

DENYS

How's your crop?!

That stops her. She looks at him, shakes her head. Then:

KAREN

Let's go!

DENYS

Your horse!

KAREN

To hell with him!

The plane accelerates across the meadow, lifts into the sky.

FLYING

Africa from the air. The possibilities are endless but would include a herd of elephant moving through the high forest, a soda lake ringed by flamingoes, the Suswa volcano, all sorts of game on the plain.

Karen is ecstatic. As a pilot, Denys is more bold than expert: once, they'll exchange a look, then laugh, when he cuts it too close.

The mood is one of exhilaration, all concern put aside. Toward the end, Karen will grow quiet. Heading home, she'll turn in her seat, hair streaming, to look at Denys, her carefree warrior, reach back to him but fail to touch. She will live to be seventy-seven years old, and remember these as the finest moments of her life.

EXT/AT THE MEADOW-DAY-WIDE

The plane lands, runs the length of the meadow.

NEW ANGLES

As Denys guns the plane around, KILLS the engine. Both wriggle out of their cockpits, Denys first. Now he sees that she is streaming tears. She looks at him, grins, laughs, cries, TRIES TO SPEAK, can't, laughs, TRIES AGAIN, still can't, shrugs, shakes her fist at the sky, SHOUTS an aargh. He laughs at her, starts to walk away. She runs after him, jumps on his back like a schoolgirl.

INT/EXT/THE BANK LOBBY-DAY

Customers. Farah waits. Karen comes out of an office, dressed in her best, says good-bye to the one-handed banker, goes out the door, Farah following.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

90/

On the street:

KAREN

They own us now. But we've got
a year.

FARAH

God is great, msabu.

KAREN

He's charging three per cent.

EXT./ON THE FARM-DAY

Karen, Belknap, Denys follow a broad trail of blood through
a field of young coffee trees, some broken.

They come to stand over the bloody carcass of a young bullock.
Karen moves upwind of the stench.

BELKNAP

Lazy, filthy bastards.

KAREN

(to Denys)

Almost a kilometer, and he's a
thousand pounds--can they do that?
(Denys nods)

BELKNAP

For the fun of it.

KAREN

(absent)

It's their nature to kill, they
don't mean it against us.

BELKNAP

We'll see how they like their
dinner with a little strychnine.

KAREN

(irritated)

Nonsense.

BELKNAP

When lions start on cattle, they
don't quit--we can't afford another
ox.

KAREN

(to Denys)

Is that right?

DENYS

Not always. Mostly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

91/

She doesn't want to kill these lions. But:

KAREN

They'll have to be shot then.

BELKNAP

I'm married, Miz Blixen--I'm not paid to hunt.

(beat)

They'll be back tonight to chew on this one--I'll dose 'em good.

KAREN

(beat, tight-lipped)

Denys and I will shoot the lions.

(beat)

That's all, Belknap.

(he shrugs, goes)

Mister Belknap?

(on his turn)

If there's strychnine on the farm, remove it. If you speak again of poisoning an animal, I'll have you off the property.

His look is sullen; he stalks off. In a moment, mild:

DENYS

You ought not talk that way to a man, unless you want to lose him.

She looks at him, hawks, spits.

INT/LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

Denys works on his double rifle, a holstered revolver and electric torch nearby. Karen's at his feet, her mind elsewhere.

KAREN

These lions . . . they know we'll be there.

DENYS

(works on, then)

Will they come then?

(CONTINUED)

KAREN

(beat)

Yes. Just as we would.

He looks at her, then nods. Then:

KAREN (cont'd)

How do we do this?

DENYS

Don't know. Lions at night . . .
it's really not done.

She stares, then laughs, very merry.

DENYS (cont'd)

You'll want soft shoes, I think.

EXT/A LOW RISE-NIGHT

Nothing there but grass and sky. Now a lion moves over the crest, silhouetted just a moment, disappears into the grass. And another, following.

EXT/THE COFFEE FIELD-NIGHT

Very dark, just the tops of the coffee trees--like bushes--discernible, glistening.

All around, NIGHT SOUNDS, each small noise distinct. A sense of much activity, unseen. Now, a different sound, the SCUFF of moccasins.

Dim, Karen and Denys MOVE THROUGH SHOT, slow, wary. A gleam of moonlight on his rifle, her electric torch.

The SHOT looks down a row of coffee trees. They come INTO FRAME, stop, kneel down. Denys points.

Down the corridor, a blur of white, the carcass against the ground.

They settle down to wait. SUDDENLY, the crazed CACKLE of a hyena, near. It startles us, not them.

LATER

Waiting, not intent. Stiff, Karen shifts. Now Denys grabs her, freezing her, points.

Very near, a snake. It slithers along, full of menace.

Karen's calm, just watches. The snake moves past her boots, disappears. To Denys, she imitates the snake, tongue flickering. He chokes back a laugh.

LATER

93/

Waiting. Suddenly, Denys is intent. Vague, the SOUND of something large moving.

The carcass twitches, jerks. Dim, a sense of the lions on the ox; the SOUND of them feeding, a SNUFFLING, BONES CRACKING.

Denys SNICKS his safety off.

THE LIONS' POV

Not a glare, just a sudden circle of yellow light and half the outline of a man standing, aiming. [Karen's just behind Denys, to his right, with the flashlight.]

REVERSE

Two lions (their eyes, mostly) feeding, caught by the light. TWO SHOTS, very fast. The light goes wild, looking all around, searching for another lion, steadies, returns to the carcass. A SILENCE, no noise at all.

WITH KAREN AND DENYS

Moving to the dead ox. Her flashlight finds two young male lions, dead where they fell.

DENYS

I'd have sworn there was another.

KAREN

No. They came alone.

(sighs)

They were good friends, these two. They got it in their heads to make a raid, just to see if they could do it. Then they couldn't let it be.

It was on a dare they came tonight, just a story for the ladies. Now they're dead for that.

DENYS

(as they go)

You've got a quite peculiar mind.

KAREN

(in a moment)

The wild things always lose.

DENYS

(in a moment, dry)

Not always.

Makeshift. It's hell-for-leather, no uniforms or helmets, settlers versus Government House. Cars, carriages, spectators line the field; two inabriates cross it, oblivious to their peril. Much drinking, SHOUTING.

The action's furious: riders fall, careen through the crowd, the referee FIRES a pistol when the ball goes out of bounds.. Bror's a contestant, and the pretty teenager of New Year's Eve (Felicity), older now, the only woman on the field.

Karen watches, chats with Lady Macmillan.

A swirl of commotion on the field--horses bumping, riders SWEARING--and out of the melee, the ball's hit long toward government's goal. Felicity, a male opponent, are after it in a flash.

They're stride for stride for half the field, ponies bumping, elbows flying, until she rides him off the ball and--with a great looping backhand--drives it home. The referee FIRES.

Felicity's surrounded by her teammates as they trot back to midfield.

Karen watches.

LADY MACMILLAN
Quite something, young Felicity.

KAREN
Yes, indeed.

Bror slides off his horse, laughing, gives up his place to a replacement, takes champagne.

WITH KAREN-A MOMENT LATER

Lady Macmillan's turned away talking as Bror comes to Karen.

BROR
How are you, Tanne?

KAREN
Getting old, I think. Not you.
The shooting's all right?

BROR
(shrugs, cheerful)
Ah. The good years are behind us.
I'll make a living.
(grins)
Unless I take to drink. Yourself?

KAREN
Belknap's quit. I can't afford him anyway. A decent crop will get me through. Just.

(CONTINUED)

BROR

I'll be glad of that.

Play's resumed; they'll watch as they talk.

BROR (cont'd)

Finch-Hatton's not here?

KAREN

Uganda. Some maharajah.

BROR

(sips champagne)

It occurred you might be wanting a divorce.

Moment. A glimpse of her old fear.

KAREN

Has she got money?

(no response)

Of course she's got money.

(beat)

Is this important, Bror?

BROR

(shrugs)

I suppose so.

KAREN

(a sigh, then tart)

I'll have to accuse you of something, you know. Or did you think you'd have it the other way round?

BROR

(grins)

No. Fire away. Whatever, I've surely done it.

(serious)

Thank you, Tanne.

Moment. They're very old friends, truly fond of each other. Relenting, she smooths his hair.

KAREN

I shan't worry you'll be happy. But it will please me.

BROR

(nods, then)

You'll let me know what the solicitors need?

(CONTINUED)

She nods. He kisses her lightly and there's a look between them. With a half-smile, but serious:

BROR (cont'd)
I remember that. Quite well.

He grins his marvelous grin, offers a small salute, turns away, at once caught up in the conviviality of the crowd.

She watches him, bleak. No tears, but she reaches for a cigarette.

EXT/ON THE FARM-DAY

Muscles bulging, several Kikiyu strain to hold up a wagon from which one wheel's removed. Karen, filthy, greases the axle.

Farah, fastidious, disapproving, waits; he's brought her tea.

FARAH
These Kikiyu can do this work,
msabu.

She nods to the Kikiyu holding the wheel; he moves to refit it. Her attention's on the work, not Farah:

KAREN
I thought I'd get myself a
Somali--do you think they're
bright enough?

Farah frowns. The Kikiyu think this is very funny, almost drop the wagon. Karen comes for her tea. As she sips:

FARAH
I think Bedar will come today.

KAREN
(absent, watching)
Bedar is in the Mara.

FARAH
It may be so, msabu. Unless he
comes today.

KAREN
(ignores him)
The other side now.

And she's back to work, moving among the Kikiyu, smiling with them, their pleasure apparent.

EXT/ON THE FARM-LATER

97/

Sundown. Tired, Karen walks home alone. Now, faint, O.S.,
MUSIC. She walks more quickly, breaks into a run.

EXT/ON THE TERRACE-MINUTES LATER

The light fading. The gramophone on the table, the record
finished, still revolving, running down.

Denys, dirty, exhausted, fallen asleep in the lounge chair,
a champagne bottle by his side, his glass spilt in his lap.

Eager, Karen enters, slows. Quiet, she'll take the needle
from the record, get her straight chair and place it--just
so--next to his, take the glass from his lap, sit. And touch
his chair.

WIDER--ON THEM

A portrait. The sense of another era, ending. And of them.
There is something about their postures that has to do with
lions: her sense of connection with her sleeping mate . .
calm . . protective . . waiting.

INT/THE BATHROOM-NIGHT

Denys lolls in the bathtub, feet up for Karen to paint with
a fungicide.

KAREN

They were awful?

DENYS

It wasn't hunting they wanted.
Just killing.

KAREN

How would Farah know that?

DENYS

Africa. Bloody Africa.

(beat)

What we need . . is a swim
in the ocean.

KAREN

Wouldn't that be lovely?

DENYS

We could go day after Christmas.

KAREN

(stunned; she's forgotten)
Christmas.

A great bonfire, and Karen, receiving a long line of her tenants who greet her first, then move to the improvised table where Farah doles out portions of tobacco, sugar, candy.

STUDY the African faces--planes and angles, fire-lit, and magnificent eyes:

--A man of 50, gnarled, his dignity untarnished.

--A toothless crone, grinning in anticipation.

--A young mother, sleek and shy.

--A boy of 10 who's defied his elders to claim a place in line.

--A young man, stiff with pride, who takes the lion's tooth from his neck to make Karen a present, leaves the line, declining her gift, her gaze on him a moment long.

Over this, VOCAL MUSIC, a capella, in Swahili, a lilting language.

EXT/THE COASTLINE-DAY-AERIAL

Rushing low above dazzling beach and rolling surf. Now ANGLE ADJUSTS to include the shadow of the biplane.

EXT/ON THE BEACH-WIDE

From the sea, so broad breakers fall away to reveal a great expanse of beach, a small adobe house in the b.g. and their figures, very small, running to the ocean, apparently naked.

IN THE SURF

They dive into incoming waves, surface in the foamy trough.

Karen stands waist-deep, back to CAMERA, slicks back her hair, watches Denys dive through a wave, ride another back to her.

CLOSE ON THEM

Sleek. A long look and now, in slight SLOW MOTION, they kiss, and are swept away by another wave breaking around them.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

Very CLOSE, in the same slight SLOW MOTION.

--Her profile against the sand, eyes closed, and now his finger, tracing her lip.

--Her stomach, streaked with salt, and now his head, licking it away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

99/

--His hand, brown on her white hip.

--Her shoulder, and now his fingers on her upper arm, revealing her armpit as he pins her arm above her head.

--Their calves, interlocked, muscles taut, ADJUSTING to include their feet, her heel, his toes, bracing against the sand.

--His face, eyes open, smiling, and now her head coming INTO FRAME above him.

--Her hand, open-palmed, spent, against the sand.

EXT/ON THE BEACH-NIGHT

A small fire. Wine, the remains of shellfish. They're in caftans, his head in her lap.

KAREN

I won't be happier than this,
I think.

DENYS

Why go on then?

KAREN

How else remember?

(long beat)

It's time I settled things
with Bror.

DENYS

(points)

Sirius. The dog star.

KAREN

You don't mind being with another
man's wife?

DENYS

(as though curious)

You see yourself as a possession
then.

KAREN

I'm thinking I'll divorce him.

DENYS

Um. Well . . . that will solve the
problem.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

100/

KAREN

(dry)

You're quite good at this, Denys.

DENYS

(beat)

Did you want children?

KAREN

I'm not supposed to do that.

DENYS

How do we gain by marriage then?

KAREN

I might like it.

(no response)

I would like someone to ask
sometime. Do that, will you?
If I promise to say no?

DENYS

Just trust you, eh?

They laugh, kiss, then:

DENYS (cont'd)

I could not love thee, dear, so much/
Loved I not Freedom more.

KAREN

It's Honour, not Freedom.

DENYS

(grins)

Whatever.

They kiss again.

VERY HIGH AERIAL

Looking down on the biplane, very small, lonely in the dawn
sky, itself flying high above a great sweep of Africa.

INT/MUTHAIGA CLUB DINING ROOM-NIGHT-MOVING SHOT

Converted, decorated for Monte Carlo night at the club. A
vertical wheel of chance, tables of chemin de fer, dice,
baccarat, 21.

MOVING through the usual crowd, playing, chatting, TO NOTICE
Denys and Felicity talking near the patio entrance; she's
animated, her gestures broad, but this is not a flirtation,
just two handsome people chatting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

101/

AND FIND KAREN across the room, standing in a small group, her attention on Denys.

WITH KAREN

HUGE MAN

--want a fortune the week they're off the boat, no sense of what's involved.

DELAMERE

(passing by)

Can I get a lift with you, Karen?
I've broken a wheel.

KAREN

If you're ready now--I'm bushed.

DELAMERE

(he's not, but)

All right.

KAREN

Find Denys, will you--tell him it's time?

HER POV

As Delamere makes his way to Denys, who listens, apologizes to Felicity. And now looks across the room at Karen.

INT/HER BEDROOM-NIGHT

Denys is propped up in bed, peeling and eating an orange. At her vanity, Karen examines a stain on the sleeve of her robe, then:

KAREN

How would you like to come help me run things?

He just looks at her, eats his orange. She comes to sit on the bed; he has to make room for her.

KAREN (cont'd)

You can't hunt forever; it looks a good crop this year.

(takes an orange section)

I'd give you half my interest--we'd go partners.

DENYS

(beat)

When we voted opposite . . .
who'd prevail?

(CONTINUED)

KAREN

We could toss for it.

She's blithe, but we know she's serious. She's spilled some juice on his stomach, licks it away: an invitation. He doesn't respond.

EXT/THE COFFEE FIELDS-DAY

Gray and green in the drizzling rain, not yet in bloom.

INT/DRAWING ROOM-DAY

O.S., the RAIN. Karen is doing a portrait of Kamante. In time:

KAMANTE

When you go in the sky--with Bedar--can you go where God is?

KAREN

No. We cannot get that high.

KAMANTE

(long pause)

It is high, where God is.

KAREN

Would you like to go in the aeroplane with Bedar?

KAMANTE

(long pause)

No.

KAREN

Why not?

KAMANTE

God is afraid when people come up high.

KAREN

Why would he be afraid?

KAMANTE

God does not like people to look at him.

INT/DRAWING ROOM-NIGHT

Denys reads, Karen's in a chair opposite with sewing, finishes with her shorts, takes up his shirt, examines it.

KAREN

Have you got buttons anywhere?

(CONTINUED)

DENYS

(quiet)

What are you doing?

KAREN

Mending your shirt.

DENYS

(beat)

I have that done in town, Karen.

Moment. She's got the message, is stunned, hurt. She drops the shirt on his chair as she leaves the room. He's thinking: I don't want to hurt her, why can't she let it be?

INT/DINING ROOM-DAY

Karen and an earnest YOUNG MAN in corduroy stand over a map spread on the table.

YOUNG MAN

We'll come just along here--
from west of town to the property
just east.

KAREN

There's a road there already.

YOUNG MAN

Well, a track, really--this will
be a proper road--gravel, a lane
each way. If you like, we'll
bring it straight on out to you.
You'd stand that cost, a course.

KAREN

How much would it be?

YOUNG MAN

(rolling his map)

Say . . . two hundred pounds and
a bit. Not more than three, surely.

KAREN

Good Lord.

YOUNG MAN

That's just our cost, actually;
we thought you might like it.

KAREN

That's kind, thank you--I suppose
I like the old roads, really.
Can I get you tea?

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG MAN

Can't, thanks. I've got my Kukes
working down the way: leave 'em
alone--you know how they are.

KAREN

(not unkindly)

No . . . I've never really known
how they are at all.

ANGLE ADJUSTING to see them to the door, AD LIBBING thanks-
so-much and cheery-bye. As she returns:

KAREN

(under her breath)

A proper road.

INT/LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

Denys and Karen on the floor before the fire, playing dominoes
at a low table. Brandy.

KAREN

--A proper road, he called it.

DENYS

Felicity Boyd's asked to come
with the camera folks I'm taking
round Samburu.

KAREN

(beat)

If you'd said no, you wouldn't
have told me. So you've said yes.

DENYS

No. I don't much care whether
she comes or not. I thought I'd
speak with you about it.

KAREN

I'm damned if I'll say thank
you.

DENYS

Tania . . . there's no reason for
her not to come.

KAREN

(incredulous)

You're living in my house!

DENYS

I've known her since short pants.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN
She's mad for you!

DENYS
I'll be armed--I'm not defenseless.

KAREN
You want her to go.

DENYS
I want things that don't matter
. . not to matter.

KAREN
Then tell her no.

DENYS
(beat, quiet)
And then . . what else will there
be?

(beat)
You know I don't lie to you.

KAREN
It's not your candor that's at
issue!

(beat)
I won't allow this, Denys.

DENYS
(beat)
You've really no idea the effect
that language has.
(beat)
In the Congo, there's a vine that
grows only on one sort of tree.
They're symbiotic, the one can't
live without the other. In time,
the vine strangles the tree--
they both die.

KAREN
We're not in the Congo.

DENYS
I love you well enough to know
how much you'd find to want.

KAREN
(beat, slow)
You'd lose me over this?

DENYS
I hope not.
(beat)
You understand she's not important.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN
Apparently she is.

He truly weighs what he'll do. Then:

DENYS
I'll be going to Samburu. She'll
come or not.

KAREN
Then you'll be living elsewhere.

DENYS
As you wish.

She chuckles, bitter, then:

KAREN
You haven't learned to pay for
things.
(no response)
Perhaps you'll find you miss me.

DENYS
(quiet)
Yes. There's that.

EXT/THE COFFEE FIELDS-DAY-CLOSE ON A TREE

Heavy with clumps of red berries. And black hands come INTO
FRAME, nimble and quick, stripping the ripe coffee.

EXT/AT THE SHED-DAY

ON a long wooden trough through which water-borne berries
bob and float. Natives on both sides of the trough select
and discard coffee that's too green. Karen works with them.
A sense that she's losing herself in the work, that her
people know she's to be left alone.

INT/INSIDE THE SHED-DAY

At the soaking tanks. Karen's taken a break, drinks tea,
seems tired, stands to return to work.

INT/THE SHED-DAY

Karen moves along the tanks where pulpers husk the water-
soaked beans, oblivious to those who watch her.

INT/DINING ROOM-NIGHT

Karen, alone at dinner, fighting to keep her eyes open.

EXT/THE DRYING TABLES-DAY

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Karen, natives, spreading the husked coffee for the sun to dry. She's robotic.

INT/THE SHED-NIGHT

Kerosene lamps, clanking machinery: a huge revolving drum, heated by a wood-burning furnace stoked by sweating natives. Karen, withdrawn, watching.

INT/HER BEDROOM-NIGHT

She's deep asleep, exhausted. Now, O.S., a HUBBUB, BUILDING, men SHOUTING, RUNNING, and now a FRANTIC BANGING at the front door. When she comes awake, it's instantaneous: she's out of bed, gone in a flash.

EXT/AT THE COFFEE SHED-NIGHT

Hundreds of Kikuyu stand silent, grave, in the glow of the huge fire. Some have buckets.

The entire structure is ablaze, all hope of saving it already gone.

Karen watches. She's smoking, detached, a spectator.

A toddler comes to her, hands at the pocket of her robe where there might be candy. When she kneels to the child--strangely--it has her full attention.

She smiles, pokes at the child, tickling; it wriggles.

KAREN

All gone.

She stands again to watch the fire, her hand idle on the child as it tries the other pocket.

EXT/AT THE COFFEE SHED-DAY-WIDE

Burned to the ground, still smoldering. Karen and Delamere walk slowly around the ruin. Kikuyu youngsters dash hot-footed among the charred and twisted remains, salvaging this and that. Farah waits.

WITH KAREN-MOVING

Denys is her last hope, a fact that will shape and color everything she'll do. Now, about her humor, something insistent, brittle.

(CONTINUED)

DELAMERE
Insurance?

KAREN
That's for pessimists.

DELAMERE
What about your family?

KAREN
They write often. To say I've squandered their money. I've squandered it well, I think.

DELAMERE
(beat)
There's Denys.

KAREN
Not really.
(laughs)
He likes me not to need him. He'd think of me as one of those vines, the kind that strangle their host? He'd give me all I asked . . . and leave.

I'm broke, D.

They walk. A new thought occurs to her.

KAREN
I've got to get some land for my people.

DELAMERE
Even the odd little acre's expensive.

KAREN
No, I need a big chunk. Enough that they can all stay together.

DELAMERE
You've trouble enough--don't worry about that.

They've come to Farah.

FARAH
I can go now, to fetch Bedar.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN
No. He wouldn't like that.
(to Delamere)
We're out of coffee this morning
. . but I can give you tea . .

INT/SMALL GOVERNMENT OFFICE-DAY

A sympathetic BUREAUCRAT at his desk, Karen sitting opposite.

BUREAUCRAT
(prepares to write)
How many people would you have
to move?

KAREN
About a thousand, I think.

BUREAUCRAT
(stunned)
Good Lord.

COMMISSIONER (V.O.)
That's impossible.

INT/LARGER GOVERNMENT OFFICE-DAY

She's in different clothes. The COMMISSIONER'S in uniform,
has given her tea.

COMMISSIONER
There's no arable land that size
outside the reserves.

KAREN
What are you "reserving" it for?
Golf?

COMMISSIONER
And if there were, we'd not put
natives on it.

KAREN
Since it's theirs, that wouldn't
be right, would it?

COMMISSIONER
It's not theirs, Baroness. It
belongs to the colony, and the
colony to the crown. We're short
labor on the established farms
already--

KAREN
The white farms, you mean.

(CONTINUED)

COMMISSIONER

The scheme you're proposing would have them working for themselves-- the economy'd be a shambles. It's really quite impossible.

KAREN

Yes, it always is . . . Who must I see next?

COMMISSIONER

You've run through us all, I'm afraid.

She stands, puts on her gloves.

KAREN

We've a new governor, haven't we.

COMMISSIONER

Sir Joseph? He's not yet arrived.

KAREN

But will soon, I'm told. Poor as I am, you do still ask me to things.
(and smiles)

INT/DRAWING ROOM-DAY

She's packing books in crates. Now, O.S., the NOISE of a lorry arriving, its door SLAMMING, brisk STEPS into the house. She knows who it is.

DENYS (O.S.)

Tania?

She waits for him to enter. He's driven long and hard.

DENYS

I didn't know till we'd got to the border. A bearing froze, then we lost a--

KAREN

(unsteady)

I think you'd better hug me right away.

A long hug, her body remembering his. Then:

KAREN (cont'd)

It seems I'll do most anything to get your attention.

(beat)

Can you stay for dinner?

Coffee and brandy. She's curled up on the couch; he's on the floor at her feet.

KAREN

--The bank says I can stay however long, but I think they mean: not too long. D'you know they plan to cut this up? Little houses. For little people who work in town.

DENYS

We'll see how they like lions in the yard.

KAREN

My people come round the house every day, just to wait--they think I've got some answer. I've got to get them some land of their own.

DENYS

Your friends won't like that much.

KAREN

The white ones, you mean.

(shrugs)

They'll be rid of me soon enough.

(Ask me to stay. Marry me. But he lets it go.)

KAREN (cont'd)

I've got to think what I'll do. Paint? I'm a hack that way. Teach school? Good Lord.

(beat)

Sometimes I think I might be able to write. Not well, but to make a living. D'you think?

DENYS

I don't know.

KAREN

My poor family. I've got them near bankrupt--now they'll have to take care of me all over again.

(Again, an opportunity.)

DENYS

(beat)

You'd leave Kenya.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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KAREN

(beat)

Yes.

DENYS

(beat)

I've got some money. You could
take a house in town.

She can have Africa, at least for a while . . or Denys.

KAREN

(half to herself)

Like the little people.

(to Denys)

You'd keep me then.

(no response)

And we'd stay . . friends?

DENYS

Of course.

He's chosen the literal meaning. And either way, she knows
it wouldn't work. Moment.

KAREN

Thank you . . I don't think so.

(beat)

Are you going on to town?

DENYS

If you like.

(beat)

I'd rather stay.

Moment.

KAREN

Well . . I've never stood on
principle too long. Get me
another brandy, will you?

EXT/THE GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE-DAY-WIDE

An afternoon reception on the lawn to greet the new governor.
A large crowd. A long reception line, after which there
are tables of food, several bars.

In order, Delamere, Karen, Denys in the line, hearing the new governor and his wife. The Commissioner is to his left, performing introductions.

COMMISSIONER

The Right Honorable Hugh Chomondale, Lord Delamere.

KAREN

Commissioner.

SIR JOSEPH

Delamere.

COMMISSIONER

Baroness.

DELAMERE

Your servant, sir.

COMMISSIONER

The Baroness von Blixen-Finecke.

SIR JOSEPH

(to her deep curtsy)
I'm sorry to know that Kenya will be losing you.

KAREN

You've heard of my trouble then.

SIR JOSEPH

Yes.

KAREN

And of my problem now?

SIR JOSEPH

Yes.

KAREN

Will you help me?

COMMISSIONER

Baroness, you really--

SIR JOSEPH

That's quite difficult.

Delamere and Denys, unprepared, watch with interest. The line is beginning to BUZZ. She studies Sir Joseph, seems to curtsy--but kneels before him! takes time to arrange her skirt. A GASP.

SIR JOSEPH (cont'd)

Please get up, Baroness.

KAREN

Kenya is a hard country for women, Sir Joseph. So there's a chivalry here, of a sort. You're a powerful man. And I've nowhere else to go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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SIR JOSEPH
Please do me the courtesy of
letting us discuss this in a
proper way.

Delamere and Denys are fighting off grins.

KAREN
You musn't be embarrassed. I've
lost everything--it costs me
very little, to beg of you.

The Commissioner is motioning to an officious aide-de-camp.
Sir Joseph's wife, LADY BYRNE, regal, watches Karen sharply.

KAREN (cont'd)
The land was theirs, you see; we
took it. And now they've nowhere
else to go.

The aide-de-camp arrives, would lift her to her feet, but:

DENYS
(pleasant)
I shouldn't do that.

DELAMERE
(more pleasant)
Or I'll break your bloody arm.

Sir Joseph, no fool, assesses things: the settlers and the
government types are perfectly capable of slugging it out.

SIR JOSEPH
I'll look into it myself. And
I will do the very best I can.

KAREN
May I have your word, Sir Joseph?

LADY BYRNE
You have mine, madam.

Karen gets up, brushes her skirt, SAYS thank you to Sir
Joseph, pauses before Lady Byrne.

KAREN
I do thank you.

And curtsies low. The movement of the line resumes.

EXT/ON THE LAWN-LATER

With Karen, Delamere and Denys, drinking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

115/

DELAMERE

"You're a powerful man . . ."

Laughter. Now Denys, exaggerating great sad eyes:

DENYS

You musn't be embarrassed. Just
because I've wrecked your party.
(more laughter)

KAREN

They've gone soft, I tell you:
Old Belfield would have left
me there till midnight.

DELAMERE

You know what you've said, don't
you? Africa for the Africans. We'll
not hear the last of that.

KAREN

That's a justice we'll never see.
(to both)

You are getting old: there was a
moment there when I thought you
were going to help me.

INT/LIVING ROOM-DAY.

Karen is moving through the room, writing prices on slips
of paper, pinning them to pieces of her furniture. Natives
move the larger pieces outside. Farah follows her.

KAREN

(as she works)

--You must have them ready to
leave before the rains. It is
good land, enough for all, and
they must not fight about it,
or be any trouble to the authorities
--do you understand?--or they will
lose it.

FARAH

Yes, msabu..

KAREN

You must make them understand
that I will not be here to
speak for them. They must behave.

FARAH

This land is far?

(CONTINUED)

KAREN

By Dagoretti. Not too far.

FARAH

(beat)

Msabu? How can it be now . .
with me and yourself?

KAREN

You will have some money.
Enough, I think.

FARAH

(reproachful)

This is not of what I speak.

Moment, through which she continues her work.

KAREN

Do you remember how it was on
safari . . In the afternoons I
would send you ahead, to find
a place and wait for me?

FARAH

And you can see the fire and
come to this place.

KAREN

Yes. Well, it is like that. Only
this time I am going first and
I will wait for you.

Farah considers this.

FARAH

It is far where you are going?

KAREN

Yes.

FARAH

This fire must be very big.
So I can find you.

Her back's to him. She gestures at the andirons.

KAREN

Take these on to the lawn.

Because she's crying. Alone, she breaks down.

The room is nearly bare, much as it was when she and Bror first came. The candlebra is gone; stubby candles light the long table. They've dressed for dinner; her gown is long, her jewelry absent. Juma pours coffee, retires. Karen is smoking, looking around at the room.

KAREN

We should've had it this way
all the time.

(beat)

I think you haven't changed at
all.

DENYS

I think I'm much improved.

When you're through with this
rummage sale of yours, let's
do something just ourselves?

KAREN

I'd like to go flying.

DENYS

Um.

(beat)

I'm going down to Tsavo--there's
some land might be right for a
tourist place. I'll come get
you Friday--we'll go to Rudolph
for the weekend--there's a spot
I know.

KAREN

I'd like that.

(long beat)

You're really going to let me go.

He doesn't respond.

KAREN (cont'd)

(calm)

Do you remember how it was with
us, along the Tana?

DENYS

Yes.

KAREN

I've got this little thing I've
lately learned to do . . .

When it's so hard I think I shan't
go on, I try to make it worse.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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KAREN (cont'd)
I make myself think about Barclay.
Our camp on the river. My first
lion. How fine you are.

When I'm certain I can't stand it
. . I go one minute more. And then
I know I can bear anything.

She stubs out her cigarette, smiles.

KAREN (cont'd)
Would you like to help?

DENYS
All right.

She stands, holds out her hand to him.

KAREN
Come dance with me then.

EXT/ON THE TERRACE-NIGHT

Denys brings the gramophone to the old stone mill table.
They wind it, start the record. A WALTZ, made for an
eighteenth century ballroom. She takes off her shoes.

We're CLOSE ON THEM as they dance. A sense of their pain,
their acceptance of it, and of great fondness, bittersweet.
In time, tears on his cheeks. Not hers.

CRANE SHOT-MOVING TO A HIGH ANGLE

As he waltzes her off the terrace and out across the broad
lawn till we almost lose them in the dark.

EXT/AT THE FARM-DAY-WIDE ON THE HOUSE AND LAWN

Furniture, many tables, some makeshift, holding her china
and glassware, everything on sale. A number of visitors,
working class people, mostly; none of the settlers we've
seen before, of course.

WITH KAREN

Strolling among the shoppers, watching them paw over her
things, sit in her chairs, scoff at her artwork.

A LITTLE GIRL, six or seven, runs from the house to Karen,
clutching a crystal animal, hands her a greasy bank note.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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KAREN

That's five rupees. It's marked ten.

LITTLE GIRL

Mummy said you'd bargain with me.

KAREN

Mummy was wrong.

The girl doesn't know what to do.

KAREN (cont'd)

You musn't bargain on the price of good things--it's got to be paid or the thing's of no value.

(beat)

My father brought me this from London, when I was small. It was very nice to have, because my sisters got nothing at all.

(a pause)

We musn't let it go cheaply. Is that all you have?

(the girl nods)

Then you must take it as a gift. That way, it's priceless. Do you understand that?

The girl thinks on that, digs in the pocket of her smock for an orange. Karen nods, takes it. The girl runs off.

Karen's strolling on when Denys comes out of the house, CALLS to her.

DENYS

Friday!

They wave, he goes toward his lorry. Karen CALLS to him.

Underhand, she throws the orange--a long way, really, but still it bounces, rolls toward Denys. He goes for it, waves another goodbye.

Karen's already engaged with another shopper.

EXT/OPEN COUNTRY AT TSAVO-NIGHT

Denys and Kanuthia, silent at a small fire, the plane outlined against the night sky behind them. Denys is staring into the fire, absently takes the orange from his pocket, begins to peel it.

Dawn. Denys pitches his kit into the plane. Kanuthia's hanging back.

DENYS

Kwenda sasa.

Kanuthia doesn't move. Denys is thoughtful: he doesn't dismiss the Africans in these things. He walks round the plane, checks rudder and ailerons, guy wires. There's nothing wrong.

He gets into the cockpit, motions to Kanuthia to heave on the prop. The engine COMES ALIVE.

Denys looks to Kanuthia, shrugs. Kanuthia hesitates, then, giving another meaning to the gesture, shrugs himself. Denys grins. Kanuthia gets into the second cockpit, a fatalist.

WIDE

The plane accelerates across the hardpan, is airborne, climbs. It's a half-mile away when suddenly there's SILENCE; the plane begins to descend. Long silent moments, an EXPLOSION, small in the distance, when it crashes. And now, black smoke.

EXT/THE NGONG HILLS-DAY-VERY WIDE

At the gravesite Karen selected for herself. In the f.g., the three Kikuyu who've dug the grave wait, now move away from it as far in the b.g. a procession of cars and lorries edges up the hill, stops.

So far away we can't make them out, people leave their cars and men take the coffin from the rear of a truck.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Still QUITE WIDE. Delamere, other men we've seen before, lead the way with the coffin, struggling in the slippery knee-high grass. The minister, perhaps thirty other mourners, Bror and his wife among them.

And Karen, veiled, in black, just behind the coffin.

We're struck by the pain on these faces, as much, perhaps, for Karen as for Denys. Lady Macmillan's chin is very high. Bror is stricken.

Karen's stride is steady. She carries a small book.

AT THE GRAVE-LATER

The coffin in the ground. Karen nearest the grave, the others haphazard, spread out behind her. At distance, a few Africans.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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THE MINISTER
--The sun shall not smite thee
by day, nor the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve thee
from all evil; he shall preserve
thy soul. The Lord shall preserve
thy going out and thy coming in
from this time forth, and even
forevermore.

ALL
(ragged)
Amen.

The minister steps back, looks to Karen. She removes her
hat and veil, runs her fingers through her hair. For the
first time, we see her face: it's gaunt, beautiful. Her
voice will be low, steady, clear.

KAREN
The time you won your town the race/
We chaired you through the marketplace/
Man and boy stood cheering by/
And home we brought you, shoulder-high.

Today, the road all runners come/
Shoulder-high we bring you home/
And set you at your threshold down/
Townsmen . . . of a stiller town.

PAN the mourners. Brave men swallow. Women are crying.
Tears on Eric's cheeks. Delamere is trembling.

KAREN (Q.S.) (cont'd)
Smart lad, to slip betimes away/
From fields where glory does not stay/
Early though the laurel grows/
It withers quicker than a rose.

Felicity buries her face on her father's chest. Bilea stands
silent, away from things, fingers a talisman at his neck.

KAREN (O.S.) (cont'd)
Now you will not swell the rout/
Of lads that wore their honors out/
Runners whom renown outran/
And the name died 'fore the man.

ON KAREN

Not a tear. She no longer needs the book.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN

So set, before its echoes fade/
The fleet foot on the sill of shade/
And hold to the low lintel up/
The still-defended challenge cup.

And round that early-laureled head/
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead/
And find unwithered on its curls/
(unsteady)

A garland . . . briefer than a girl's.

Moment. Her voice steadies.

KAREN (cont'd)

Now take back the soul of Denys
George Finch-Hatton, whom you
have shared with us.

He brought us joy, we loved him
well. He was not ours.

(beat)

He was not mine.

Moment. She bends to take a handful of earth to drop onto
the coffin. Her lips move; we cannot make it out. She may
have said: I love you.

But she cannot drop the earth; the gesture is too final.
It trickles away through her hand. She turns to the mourners,
looks at them all . . . and seems to shrug. She walks away,
not toward the cars but down the slope of the hill.

At distance, Farah waits.

She pauses once, to take off her shoes. Far-off, she passes
by Farah, who turns to follow her down the hill.

INT/MUTHAIGA CLUB-DAY

Karen, dressed for travel, is at the desk, her mail in her
hand, writing out last instructions for the club.

KAREN

--Letters you'll just send on to
this address in Denmark. My
accounts should go to Hunter
and company--and anything else
you don't know what to do with.

DESKMAN

Yes, memsaab.

As she turns, the earnest young engineer is coming to her.

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG MAN
Baroness Blixen?

KAREN
I've been down your road. I
still like the old one.

YOUNG MAN
(grins)
Yes, ma'am. I've been sent to
ask if we might stand you a
drink.

KAREN
And who has sent you?

YOUNG MAN
Well . . . the members, ma'am.

A ghost of a smile, then:

KAREN
I'd like a drink, thank you.

She walks to the men's bar, hesitates just a moment at the
door, crosses over, the young man following.

INT/MEN'S BAR-DAY

Perhaps twenty-five men, all ages, a few we recognize,
including the Huge Man. A few are standing, most sit at
a series of tables. They don't acknowledge her. Karen pays
no attention to her surroundings, goes straight to the bar.
It has no mirror.

KAREN
Whisky, please.

The black bartender hesitates, looks to the young man.

YOUNG MAN
Two whiskies, please.

Karen's back is to the room; she looks straight ahead. C.S.,
the SCRAPING of chairs. Lifting her glass, she waits for
the young man's toast.

YOUNG MAN
The King, I guess.

KAREN
Rose-lipt maidens. Lightfoot lads.

She drinks.

Behind her, all the men are standing. Their conversation continues, only a few are looking at her . . . but they are damn well standing. The Huge Man stands, too, his baleful glare ready for anyone not on his feet.

WITH KAREN

She knocks back the rest of her drink, SAYS Thank You, walks briskly to the door.

Just as she walks through it, she looks left.

FREEZE FRAME

On Karen Blixen, leaving Africa.

EXT/THE NGONG HILLS-DAY

At the crest, broad and green, like the moors, all of that part of Africa below.

THE ACTRESS AS HERSELF, in blue jeans, strolls, stops to talk to us.

THE ACTRESS

These are the hills where she lived.
Denys is buried down there, and
her house was over there.

That's Nairobi. It's a big city
now; jet planes land there. But
over there . . . that is still
Africa.

She never came back.

She went home--well not home,
really--but to Denmark, and to
make a living, she wrote stories.
And she wrote about Africa.
Farah. Kamante. Her lions.
Her life on the farm.

About Denys, she wrote very
little.

She took the pen name Isak
Dinesen. Isak is the Danish
for someone who laughs.

She didn't marry, didn't fall
in love.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

THE ACTRESS (cont'd)

She was born in the time of Victoria. Before she died, on a trip to America, what she most wanted to do was have lunch with Marilyn Monroe. And she did.

She takes a folded piece of paper from her hip pocket.

THE ACTRESS (cont'd)

Some months after she left Africa, a friend wrote this to her:

(reads)

"The Masai have reported to the district commissioner at Ngong that many times, at sunrise and sunset, they have seen lions on Finch-Hatton's grave. A lion and a lioness have come there, and stood, or lain, on the grave for a long time.

"Some of the Indians who have passed the place in their lorries on the way to Kajado have also seen them. After you went away, the ground round the grave was levelled out, into a sort of big terrace. I suppose that the level place makes a good site for the lions. From there they can have a view over the plain, and the cattle and game on it."

Moment. She refolds the paper.

THE ACTRESS (cont'd)

That's nice, isn't it--to think that that might have been true.

The actress walks on.

WIDE ON THE GRAVE

A lion saunters through the grass near the grave, stops to stand looking over the valley. And now, behind him, a lioness . . . strolling toward him.

PULL AWAY AND AWAY

CREDITS RUN

THE END